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'THE BLUE UNCLOUDED.'



TEN years ago I was in the habit of daily companionship with a very dear friend, with whom I would frequently make holiday in the long summer days, under what he always

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called 'the blue unclouded.' He was a very practical man, my friend, with very little taste for poetry or appreciation of its beauties, but he liked certain bits of Tennyson, and

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above all he admired that description in the 'Lady of Shalott' of bold Sir Lancelot's ride—

'All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.'

So we spent many happy days together 'in the blue unclouded' in various lovely places; supine under the big trees of Windsor Park, happily idle, thinking of nothing while

'Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail'

of the deer in the thick fern; lying at the bottom of a boat under that delicious greenery which overhangs the Thames close by 'Cliefden's proud alcove' (not 'old cove,' as I once heard it quoted by a man who imagined it applied to the late Duke of Sutherland); on the awning-covered decks of Rhine steamers, with the long-necked bottles handy to our elbows, the grey hills melting in the evening haze, and the tinkling of the cattle-bells ringing softly in our ears; visiting the Alten Schloss at Baden, or pic-nicing in the Black Forest, but always enjoying ourselves 'in the blue unclouded.' He is dead now, my old friend, has been dead for some years; he was what is called a 'public character,' and in his last brief illness the Queen sent twice or thrice to ask after him, and people said that London would scarcely seem like London without ALBERT SMITH. But he died, and London is just the same, and most people have forgotten all about him. But I have not forgotten him; a chance phrase will bring him constantly to my memory; the mere writing the words which form the title of this little essay conjured up his presence, and I thought how often I miss him—how he would enjoy being with me at this present time!

For I am 'snatching a fearful joy,' and taking a couple of days' holiday just now. It was necessary. Man can work and man can dine: but a combination of perpetual work and perpetual dinner-party, interspersed with frequent ball and occasional

conversazione, leads to gout and idiocy. The dinner-parties this season, at least so far as I am concerned, have been most numerous and infinitely more dull than ever. This is to be accounted for, I fancy, by the fact that I am considered old enough, and, since the success of my book 'On Pre-Adamite Man,' published last year, of sufficient social status to be invited to banquets, and not, as formerly, to be asked on 'off-days.' Why is it that young people are never asked to dinner-parties? I know that the pleasures of the table are supposed to be some sort of compensation for us when we have lost—well, not the power of dancing, but the chance of getting nice partners—but there are plenty of very pleasant middle-aged people, and plenty of old people who are delightful. But these last never come to dinner-parties; *they know better!* It is Medusa in *moiré antique* to whom you are bid offer your arm; it is Syceorax in silk whom you sit next to, and who diverts you during the meal with anecdotes of the wit and humour of her son, Captain Caliban, of the Blues! I protest I know not where they come from, these wonderful, horrible old women! I was at a dinner-party this last season, and just before eight, the host, one of the best fellows living, came to me with a slip of paper in his hand, and a curious expression in his eye, and whispered, 'I want you to take down that lady, sitting on the ottoman! She's not pretty, you see, and not over-young, but very clever. Let me introduce you!' and as we were by this time close upon the ottoman, resistance was impossible, and I was presented to a green silk mountain, with a *calotte*, or top, of the most hideous kind. Ah, the memory of that old person! She ate tremendously; but she had one virtue—her appetite did not stop her tongue; she talked incessantly throughout the whole of dinner, and I was only required to throw in 'ah,' or 'indeed!' or 'of course,' as occasion served. She told me all about her household, and the way in which she was pillaged by her servants, and how

she was sure that Booth, the coachman, sold the corn, for no two horses that she'd ever heard of ate so much as hers, and how she could not possibly exist without a French maid, and she entered into so much domestic detail, that when I saw her mouth was full, and she had no chance of speaking, I cut into the monologue, and to change the subject asked her if she had been much to the opera this season.

Ah, unhappy wretch that I was to hit upon such a topic! The opera was Tophet, the opera was Gehenna, and did I think that she who was, she trusted, an English matron, with a proper sense of her duty, would wittingly support any institution like the opera, where the singers, as she was told, led horribly immoral lives? Base and cowardly as I was, I dared not argue the matter with her, but told her I thought she was quite right. I who only the night before, a non-opera night, had dined with my friend Octave, the baritone, at his charming little villa in the Regent's Park, and passed the whole evening in seeing him listen delightedly to his wife's playing, or roll in tumultuous glee with his children on the lawn. I then asked Medusa what novels she had read lately; but she told me she never read any; how should she indeed when she was told that in one of the most popular books of the present day, called, she believed, something Floyd, the heroine pushed her child into a well, and that the author advised all mothers of unruly children to do the same. I pledge you my honour this is not invention! this is simple fact! You may judge, therefore, of my relief when I heard the scrunch of the ladies' chairs on being pushed back, and looked my last on the dreadful old person—I trust for ever!

Ugh! the mere recollection of her is enough to spoil one's holiday, so let us forget all about her as quickly as possible, and do you Billy Flynn, friend of many years' standing, bring your pipe and call Smut, and we will go out and lie all tranquilly as we have done hundreds of times together

'On breezy headlands under summer skies,'

and do nothing but watch the grand and glorious sea shimmering under the blue unclouded. When I look upon this, to me, loveliest of all sights, when I see this magnificent ocean breaking away into a million million sparkles on its broad green bosom, its green bosom which is green immediately in front of me but blue in certain aspects and in the horizon of the loveliest purple hue—the long lines of white foam ever chasing each other to the beach, and whirling back in long-drawn lamentations after they have spent themselves upon the shore—the bits of rock, some jagged at the top, others rounded by the perpetual washing of the waves, but all encrusted with slippery, slimy, moss-like seaweed, which begin to show at the turning of the tide—the line of buoys, all dipping and sparkling in the sunlight like porpoises at play—the stately ships going on to their haven under the hill—the long line of black smoke left behind it by the afar-off steamer—the big bluff headland standing out in sombre purple to the right, with the little white town nestling at its base, as though embraced in the hollow of an arm—when I see all this, and when the brisk salt smell is wafted across my nostrils, and I feel double play for everything in the clear bright air, I wonder to myself how people are found to live in Babylon the Great, to toil and moil for extra guineas, and, most astonishing of all, to think that they are enjoying life! As to life? *per Jovem*, *per bellum*, what do we know of life? no, not we, but the illustrious drones? Is it life to get up at eleven, to breakfast at twelve, to ride in a long dusty enclosure, up and down, up and down amongst fifteen hundred other equestrians, from half-past twelve till two; to lunch, to shop, to drive round and round the Serpentine, to dine at eight and go forth at eleven to stuffy rooms full of bad air and simpering fools, old and young, is that life? How on earth they do it I can't tell. I am compelled to live in London. I am one of the vultures dependent for my daily meal on my proximity to that horrible carcase; but, if I were not,

I would settle down in some quiet sea-side place like this where I should be eternally happy, and——What's that you say, Billy Flynn? grim old cynic, growling over your briar-root pipe, what are you muttering about? What do you say? that the regular dwellers at the sea-side make a point of never going near the sea-shore, of never boating and never bathing, of boasting always of the loveliness of the inland scenery round their neighbourhood, but of always entirely ignoring the sea? I hear you, pulling at your great red beard, proceed to add that there is no one so thoroughly appreciative of the beauties of the sea-side, or indeed of rurality in general, as your thorough-paced Londoner, who comes to it with a fresh eye, a craving for anything *extra* brick and mortar, and stucco and pavement, and the devices of builders generally, and who is therefore prepared, as you pleasantly remark, to make very much of what is really not a great deal! Well, perhaps you're right; at all events I'm not in the humour, at the present moment, to gainsay you or to have any argument whatsoever. At the present moment—

'It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.'

This glorious rest, this surcease from toil and strife, this pleasant temporary remission from the gladiatorial literary arena, with the net always ready to enthrall, and the sword always prompt to strike, seems like a foretaste of Paradise. And to think that at this very instant there are men of family, position, and wealth who, voluntarily, of their own free will, are standing as candidates for boroughs at contested elections, and paying large sums of money for the gratification—of what? of lying, prevaricating and shuffling, of employing base means notably as the end, of kissing dirty-nosed children, complimenting slatternly trollops, and slipping five-pound notes into the dirty hands of ruffians, of trucking to solemn nincompoops, and engaging as agents men full of intellectual capacity and utterly

without moral sense, of hiring a roaring, seething, drunken mob for the purpose of fighting another mob exactly similarly constituted, of standing on a hustings, a mark for stones, dead cats, and rotten eggs, and finally, being compelled to 'address your remarks to the reporters.' And suppose the end gained and the battle won, what is the result? The power of writing M.P. after your name, of having your wife invited to some third-rate political notoriety's 'at home,' of being able to give to one among your five hundred applicants a tide-waiter's berth, or employment as a country postman (and of rendering the other four hundred and ninety-nine your enemies for life), of having, not merely a free admission to, but a duty to perform in nightly visiting a remarkably dull debating society, where the dreariest topics are discussed in the most somnolent manner, and where the 'whip' of your party keeps you up till the small hours of the morning for the purpose of saving your country by voting in the majority against the hair-powder tax. And to think that men pay money for all this misery, and large sums too! Riding the other day in the Row with a very popular member of a large constituency, he told me that, if unopposed, his re-election would cost him 1,200*l.*; but if opposed, which was unlikely, between 2,000*l.* and 3,000*l.* This is a man who has been in the House for the last five years, who is thoroughly respected in his borough, to the local interests of which he has strictly attended, and whose original election cost him 4,000*l.*! And any tailor or tallow-chandler amongst his constituents has a right to button-hole him in the lobby of the House, to call at his private residence, to deluge him with letters, and, if not attended to as he could wish, to denounce him as a traitor and impostor, and one unfit to represent their great constituency.

This glorious rest, this surcease from toil and strife! Yes, these are what are required to make a holiday thoroughly enjoyable. There are men of my acquaintance,

hard workers in the Temple o' nights, brave speakers of Westminster during the day, who, when the long vacation commences, hurry off and make their head-quarters at Chamounix or Courmayeur, and are all day long climbing Coles and Horns, and hanging suspended over precipices, and cutting holes with axes in glaciers for the reception of their hands and feet, or clinging like flies to the glistening surface of icebergs. There's pleasure! there's enjoyment! there's the exact thing calculated to set them all right for the next year's campaign! I have another friend, a clerk in a government office, who has begun life rather late, and who is determined to make the most of it. So last year, instead of quietly passing his holiday in his accustomed watering-place, he started off with an excursion-agent and a select party of thirty to Italy, Venice and back in three weeks, and everything worth seeing on the way. I, calmly sojourning at Batheable-super-Mare, received two or three wonderful letters from him—letters bearing stamps which the Batheable letter-carrier described to my children as 'outlandish,' of which the following are specimens: 'What a splendid pass is the Splügen! I was charmed with what I saw of it, which was not very much, as we had been up till midnight the night before and, having risen at 3 A.M., I was rather tired.' 'I am enchanted with Milan! We have been here twenty minutes, and we leave in a quarter of an hour for Venice!' 'Venice! Byron's Venice! All my poetical notions are bubbling within me! think of blind old Dandolo! think of the gory head rolling down the Giant's Stairs! think of—I must conclude now, as I'm going out for half-an-hour's row in a gondola, and then start on our return to England!' I need scarcely say that a horribly hurried trip like this rendered my friend very ill, instead of doing him good, and that, on his return to England, he was compelled to go down for a fortnight to a quiet sea-side place to recruit his strength.

No, ever since the Almighty him-

self named thee—' and the gathering together of the waters called He seas—'thou, O sea, hast been the true resource for the wearied, the heart-sick, and the sad! Thou wert one of the greatest sources of inspiration to one who to all these qualities added a savage cynicism, which he seemed to forget when writing of thee—

'There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes
By the deep sea, and music in its roar;
I love not man the less, but Nature more,
Roll on thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll,
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with him; his control
Stops with the shore—upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed—nor doth remain,
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan
Without a grave, unknelt, uncoffined, and
unknown.'

If mere beauty of appearance is in question, the waters need not yield the palm of loveliness to the land, though I am bound to confess that to me there is always a certain amount of association which would be melancholy if one gave way to it. Perhaps it is that in my own case the sea has swallowed up one dear to my dearest; but I always connect it, somehow, with Tennyson's wonderful epithet—'his vast and wandering grave.' The sea is the largest of all cemeteries, and its slumberers sleep without monuments. All other graveyards, in all lands, show some symbol of distinction between the great and small, the rich and the poor; but in the ocean cemetery the king and the clown, the peer and the peasant are alike undistinguished. The same waves roll over all, and the same requiem is sung by the waves. Over their remains the same storm beats and the same sun shines, and here, unmarked, the capable and the dead, the aristocrat's scion and the farmer's lad will sleep on until awakened by the same tramp, 'when the sea shall give up its dead.'

Something of this notion had Mrs. Hemans, when she wrote—

'What hidest thou in thy treasure-caves and
cells,
Thou hollow-sounding and mysterious main?

Pale glistening pearls, and rainbow-coloured
shells,
Bright things which beam unrecked of and in
vain.

Keep, keep thy riches, melancholy sea!
We ask not such from thee!

You don't enter into this, Billy Flynn? Well no, perhaps not! but it has been a wonderfully jolly day, hasn't it? and you'll go back to your easel, and I to my desk all the fresher for the holiday. This is a thoroughly quiet place; one might say of it, with the burlesque writer—

'There's nothing striking in this quiet place,
Except the smacks upon the ocean's face.'

And look here, while we've been talking the day has melted into twilight, and the twilight into dark, and a lovely young July moon has risen, and is making a straight path of light on the sea, from the shore to the horizon. Come! I've often wished to swim up such a moonlit path! All right, then we can bring Smut with us. Peel, as we descend the cliff. Now, a header off these slippery rocks! Whish! Q.



Sketched by C. A. Doyle.

STEAM-BOAT CHARACTERS.

FIVE O'CLOCK TEAS.

TIME was, when the finer birds of the world were as much marked by their finer feathers, as peacocks among barn-door fowls; when the difference between velvet and buff leather, rapiers and cudgels, was a patent and sufficient distinction between the ornaments of creation and its mere utilities; when to be a gentleman was merely to have taken the trouble to be born in the proper circle, and when to have been so born was to be marked out by dress, manners, and station, as one to whom the world was a huge plaything, worked more or less by ignoble mechanism, which, though sometimes heard of, was never to be recognized. Gentle and Simple, Court and City, like oil and water, might mix, but never mingle. If City came to Court, it was with humbleness and bated breath to ask a favour; if Court went to City, it was with noble insolence to spoil the dove-cotes. But we live in subversive times. The French Revolution has come and gone; a yard of broadcloth on shoulders narrow and gentle, differs not from another yard on shoulders broad and simple. Gentle is an hotel company director in the city, and Simple, who came to town with his boots slung round his neck, dines with princes at court, to the manifest confusion of all classes of life whatever.

In fact, what is called society, which formerly was a body more or less distinct and tangible, has now become so numerous and of so shadowy an outline, that many of the unwritten laws by which it once was governed have had to be either modified or totally repealed. Some of them are indeed kept as bug-bears, to frighten the common people from attempting to storm the citadel, and when solemnly dressed up, make more or less appalling ghosts; but upon closer inspection, the broomstick and turnip are too plainly seen to daunt any beholder of ordinary courage. We still hear sometimes of what is called the 'charmed circle,' and of the diffi-

culty of entering it, and endeavours are made to support the delusion in various ways—by the assumption, for instance, sometimes obtruded, that everybody knows everybody else, and the struggle to leave the inference, that whoever does not must be considered to be outside the boundary. But it is no longer dangerous to admit a want of acquaintance even with one with whom the circles deign to concern themselves. In short, it is admitted that society has increased beyond the power of identification.

Another effect of this increase in numbers is, that society has been forced to increase the number of subjects, in which it can be allowed to be possible that well-bred persons may take an interest. One of its latest devices, (in which, as usual, it has followed at a long interval, the lead of the Continent,) is to affect to be artistic, and so far the move has met with success, for it has supplied that greatest of all wants—the want of something to talk about. Scandal, that inexhaustible resource in small societies, loses its charm when retailed among tens of thousands, many of whom lack the necessary interest of a personal acquaintance with the victims. Dress is a sore subject, and soon exhausted; Science is tabooed, and so, as life is long and the hours leaden, Art has been taken under protection as affording matter either for pleasant *dilettante* dalliance, or for small talk of varied and general interest. Half the ball-room conversation one hears and submits to in the present day is made up of indolent criticisms on pictures, plays, books and operas, which, as is to be expected, consist for the most part either of sheer imperfections, or of stale platitudes culled from the reviewers. Artists themselves have been sent up to the very highest places in society. Artists of all sorts have become the pets of beauty, and (in spite of the financial disadvantages under which they usually labour) the favourites of

mammas. To be known to write in a fashionable and prosperous work is often as useful as to be known to have a fair landed property. But to be possessor of a tenor voice, is simply to have been born in the Imperial purple that marks the Emperor of the *salons*. The despot rules unquestioned without law or parliament. Countesses court him, marchionesses cajole him, dukes do him service to induce him to sing for them. All the dinners and dances of town are his. His too are all the fishing of Scotland, all the shooting of Norfolk, and all the yachting of Cowes, and such emulation is there among the country-houses for a temporary possession of him, that he finds himself, like his direct ancestor Orpheus, in danger of being torn to pieces, and his body sent in various directions to meet the carriages that are waiting to meet him at every railway station all over the kingdom. Such, indeed, is the admitted power of music in society, that it is allowed as a reason for the existence of many modern amusements of which the end and object are far different. 'O Liberté! que de crimes sont commis en ton nom!' said an aristocrat, who was being guillotined for being too rich; and if music goes on much longer, it may run some risk of falling into as great disrepute as Liberty itself, and the day may perhaps come when the provisional government of the sweet singers will be abolished, and themselves exiled far from their native drawing-rooms.

Foremost among the meetings which are supposed to have their origin in that desire for music, and a 'concourse of sweet sounds,' which is used as a seine net, to catch large numbers of big and little fish at small cost, stand the 'Five o'clock Teas,' with which I am concerned. I say 'supposed,' because although they first saw the light under the name of 'afternoon music,' I believe they have just about as much to do with it as crimes with Liberty, and no more—being not, perhaps, quite unconnected with it, but yet not by any means inseparable from it. In fact, I have a theory of my

own, which is this; that Tea owes its origin to the meals of life, having at length, like all other forms of labour, been subjected to sub-division. One can imagine, that in the original savage state our ancestors ate all together, probably with their fingers, certainly out of the same tub, and most likely with the single purpose of getting through as much as possible at a sitting. Then as time rolled on, the one tub gave way to a tub for each person, forks, spoons, and other amenities were gradually introduced, and now, as the latest refinement, we have got to have special meals for each sex. The men have long had breakfast as their own undisputed possession. That is the meal to which one wretched bachelor invites another, in order to smoke strong cigars, and tell strong stories (about horses, you know,) not fit for any but bachelor ears. Luncheon is a mere figure of speech, meaning nothing except in the country. Dinner is the common property of both sexes, and to that owes its peculiar charm, and the ladies thus finding nothing left for them, have now boldly invented a new meal, which goes by the name of 'five o'clock tea.' At it are seen none but ladies, and that tame class of animals who go by the name of 'ladies' men,' the supporting body for all balls and entertainments of every description, and who, being too idle to have anything to do, and too fine to have anything to think of between their two o'clock lunch and their eight o'clock dinner, have hailed the new meal with joy, and have been half-inclined to look upon it as a device on the part of the ladies to have their slaves in ordinary at their feet for an extra hour of the day.

There is one consideration which has been present to my mind for some time past, and which has been invested with serious proportions by the new fashion.

It is this. Following out strictly (as of course a well-regulated mind would wish to do) the society theory of existence, I do not know and cannot discover, or by any means imagine, when I am expected to

leave off eating and drinking, and with everybody measuring and weighing themselves and cutting off their sugar all round me, it assumes the proportions of one of the gravest of the problems of that existence. When I started in life, I started with the theory that breakfast, luncheon, and dinner were sufficient as far as eating went to maintain the vital spark and fill up the day of a gentleman.

But see what takes place now. Breakfast and luncheon are no sooner over than the time has arrived for a round of teas and ices to be conscientiously eaten under pain of the displeasure of one's most influential dowagers. Then dinner of course; and if, as is most probable, the victim of the times and fashions has to go to two balls in the evening, he must at each of them eat a supper, were it only by way of politeness in return for his card, and my friend Freddy assures me that on one of his full days last week he got through altogether no less than eight meals; so that if any appearance of logic is to be kept up, it will soon be as important a question whether a candidate for society has a good digestion as whether he is well born and properly brought up.

Apart from this and one or two other minor considerations, I do not at all object to the new fashion, in its present form. Indeed I see in it a delightful opportunity for young ladies to produce themselves before the eyes of their astonished swains in miraculous morning dresses, in addition to the opportunity they always had of producing themselves in miraculous evening dresses; and, having the ambition to be a swain myself, I see in it so far a gain to both sides, and a further facility for useful instruction in the blending of colours and the proper carriage of tulle and bonnets. There are indeed some men who are said to object to five o'clock teas, as robbing them of just that portion of the day which was erst particularly their own; in which they either attended to their 'business,' (vague and unintelligible word) or rode, or played racquets, or what not.

With such I cannot sympathize; and the more moderate of men, who are neither intensely commercial nor rabidly muscular (or what not), find in the afternoon hour of ladies' society, a peculiar charm, characterized as it is by far less restraint and ceremony, and far more familiarity than the evening ever knows (not to mention the increased facility for *tête-à-têtes* in conservatories and balconies), and gain from it an antidote to the dulness of the morning which is so inevitable a result of last night's four o'clock cotillon, and a gentle stimulant enabling them to work up to the point of brilliancy for the conversation of the evening's dinner.

And so I protest that I am delighted with tea, and not only on general principles, but also for my own special reasons. In the first place it dispenses me from a great deal of journeying about to produce the illusion that I have personally 'been and appeared' by delivering two pieces of representative pasteboard to a footman who probably loses them before his mistress comes home. This is one of society's duties which I have always held in abhorrence, as being a shade more foolish than any emanation from the brain of the wildest Bedlamite.

It is intelligible to leave a card upon new acquaintances, because it teaches them one's address and how to spell one's name, which they would never learn from a footman's announcing. But it seems to me to be the height of human extravagance to suppose that my friends who know both my name and address should be gratified not by seeing me, but by inspecting the result of Mr. Ortner's skill in line-engraving on a card. And so as tea takes the place of pasteboard I honour it. Then too it enables me to wear my lavender kid gloves a second, or even (with care) a third time; and besides that, the most regular attendants among the ladies at Lady Mens Maltre's Thursdays, whose afternoons I most affect, are, as I notice, those whose complexions look as well in the cold daylight as in the warm flood of brilliancy shed by wax tapers. In-

deed' the only members of the sex who have a second opinion on the subject are those who labour under an imputation (unjust of course) of importing into their charms either as to their cheeks a loan from the rose, or as to their eyes 'a touch of the hair-pin,' and who, if they are to show at all in the day, prefer to do it in a barouche in the Park under the cover of distance, a spotted veil and a pink parasol.

Then what can be more delicious than the making of the tea? Miss Maud Maltre and I have been practising it ever since the 'Thursdays' began, and though we have studied hard, we have not yet quite learnt how many spoonfuls are necessary, or the exact quantity of green required to make a perfect mixture. Many consultations we hold too over cream and sugar, and who takes either, or both, and I live in the hope of improving under her tuition. What a delicious soft-stealing charm I find, too, in the music which is always so good (for Lady Mena is a great musician herself), and which we sit and listen to in a quiet corner and admire so much, and always manage to applaud at the wrong time! I do not know much about music myself, but somehow I love to sit and listen to it by the side of Miss Mena's tea-table. Yes, those Thursdays are very charming, and would be more so, if it were not for that great clanking plunger Adolphus Bridoon, who hangs about like a heavy, stupid giant as he is, and will talk to Maud. His regiment is quartered in Ireland, where if the military affairs of the country were properly attended to, he ought to be made to remain. I wish I were his colonel, wouldn't I refuse him leave!

Perhaps the suburban tea is the nicest form of the thing altogether, and it furnishes a sufficient reason for the original invention of Richmond and Hampton Court. Croquet there takes the place of music, not without occasional advantages either, for there is such an *esprit de corps* in each of the opposing sides, such a delightful clinging together of 'friends,' such intense, uncompromising hatred of 'enemies,' such

consultations, and such glimpses of tiny feet, and withal, such immense fun in cheating, that the London afternoon, with so much more people and music crowded into small rooms than they were ever intended to hold, pales before it. Miss Maud always looks lovely, playing at croquet, even if she plays it badly—and we do both of us somehow manage to get croqueted a long way off from the game, and generally in the same direction—but to my eyes she does not look nearly so lovely playing the piano, even if she plays it well, which she does, for she gets surrounded by a pertinacious crowd of admirers, who engross all her attention, and whose one idea of pleasing her is to make her play a second time, which leaves me raging on a remote sofa.

Yes, on the whole I prefer croquet. The fresh air, the songs of the birds, the fine old trees flocking with their shadows the smooth green lawn, and the lawn itself, fresh and scented, jewelled with daisies and dotted with lovely girls, while the chaperons are either seated round at a good fair distance off (so as not to interfere with the game you know), or given up to the delights of thin bread and butter and strawberry ices, and like dear discreet dragons leaving the golden apples to take care of themselves, all make up a picture too fascinating to be safely dwelt upon.

Certainly for young men not about to marry (that is to say, as times go, for all young men not being marquises) tea is dangerous, and croquet tea doubly dangerous. Whether it is the sugar or the cream or the too large quantity of green in the decoction, I cannot say, but Freddy assures me that under its influence he has this season proposed to no less than five girls (each of whom he loved better than the other), and had found the idea of marriage settlements presented to him before he had regained his consciousness of the fact that he had nothing in the world but two hundred a year and an uncle to settle; and having in three of the five cases been accepted, he has had to back out ignominiously as best he might,

only to fall into the same snare at the very next five o'clock tea he went to.

With all this, I have my doubts about tea too. I am compelled to remark that as teas increase so are they increased who give them instead of balls. There are some who maintain that it is consequent upon financial considerations, and who hint that the 'all Thursdays in June,' to which Lady Mena's cards now invite one, are considerably cheaper to her than the 'Dancing' they formerly promised, and that she manages to get through the expected civilities to her visiting-list by the help of afternoon bohea at one-fourth the cost she was formerly put to by evening champagne. But in the face of the march of intellect, the increase in wealth, and the 19th century, which all the statistics of the country proclaim, I am unable to adopt that theory, and I am driven to account for the over prevalence of teas, and the corresponding decrease in balls, which has been so remarkable a feature of the past season, by the supposition that the forthcoming elections and the prospect of having to make up thousands of rosettes and to kiss all the babies of all the electors in the kingdom have so engrossed the ladies' working hours, which as everybody knows are from eleven to four at night, that they have been unable to devote to their friends more than the afternoon period formerly consecrated to the park and the consideration of the evening's dress. Anyhow, there is the fact of the increase in importance of five o'clock and the corresponding decrease of eleven. But there is a graver importance in the custom than at first sight appears. I see in it the thin end of a great social revolution, the beginning of a reformation of hours of which the idlers will be the

apostles. It may be very well for the low and vulgar people who have business to attend to in the day to have put the dinner hour lower and lower down in the evening until it has reached its present time—just as it is well and praiseworthy of them to ride in the park in the afternoon when their business is over. But Society, *proprement dit*, as everybody knows, rides at twelve o'clock, under the broiling sun, to show that it is not of the vulgar. It now wishes still more distinctly to detach itself from them, and further, it must be amused in the afternoon, while the lower orders are slaving at their work. And so it has placed this insidious meal of tea at an hour when the vulgar are not available. And looking forward into the future, I see a time when the seed thus planted shall be grown and strengthened, and become by degrees a great tree; when it shall have appropriated, one by one, the characteristics of dinner, and when we shall suddenly awake to the consciousness that instead of being a five o'clock tea it is a five o'clock dinner; while the late meal will prove to have degenerated into a light nine o'clock supper.

Then go forth, O Tea! into the world. Be strong and prosper. As in thy laudation all agree, in thy consumption let all unite; calm the politician, soothe the afflicted, revive the weary, steal with thy fumes like a gentle charm through the distracted brain of the lover, and soften with thy influence the obdurate heart of her whom he adores. Virtuous tea! thou addest not a blush to the cheek of beauty, a tint to the nose of valour, nor a wrinkle to the brow of age. Generosity marks thy path, softness and sweetness are in thy train. All hail, O Tea!

T. G. B.





Drawn by T. R. Lammont.

HARAY'S ACCOUNT OF HIS COURTSHIP.

VIS-À-VIS; OR, HARRY'S ACCOUNT OF HIS COURTSHIP.

I WAS going down to Dover,
By the afternoon express,
When I first met Kitty Lucas
In her pretty sea-side dress.
As she stepped into the carriage
On that summer afternoon,
Some one whispered, 'Good-bye, Kitty,
I'll come down and see you soon.'

'Twas her father, and he lingered
In the crowd, to see her start;
She looked up with eyes that glistened
With the fulness of her heart.
For an hour and forty minutes
Kitty was my vis-à-vis,
And I did my best to please her,
But she would not speak to me.

When I spoke she seemed to shun me,
And pretended that she read,
Though I felt quite sure she listened
To each syllable I said.
Sometimes she looked out of window,
Sometimes she would make a screen,
Though as if without intention,
Of a monthly magazine.

She was not exactly pretty,
But she looked so kind and good,
There was not a single feature,
I'd have altered if I could.
With new joy my heart was bounding,
Till that moment of my life
I had never seen the woman
I could think of as my wife.

Strange it was how little Kitty
Crept into my heart that day;
Strange it was how well I loved her
Ere an hour had passed away.
Strange the hopes and fears she awakened
While she looked so sweetly shy,
Strange how sad I felt on seeing
How the milestones flitted by.

Every moment little Kitty
Grew more precious to my heart,
Every moment we drew nearer
To the spot where we must part!
Soon we saw the heights of Dover,
Soon we saw the silver sea,
And too soon a stately lady
Came to claim my vis-à-vis.

How I trembled with emotion
When she rose to leave the train,
And I whispered, 'Good-bye, Kitty;
God grant we may meet again!
Then a look of timid wonder
Stole across her wistful face,
For a moment, then she gently
Bowed with sweet unconscious grace.

Thus we parted. All in silence
Little Kitty went her way,
And I felt as if the sunshine
Of my life had passed away.
How I thought of little Kitty
When that night I crossed the sea;
How I hoped that she was thinking
At that very time of me.

Often did prophetic fancy
With sweet visions fill my brain,
Till I sometimes felt quite certain
That we soon should meet again.
I a thousand times decided
Every word that I would say,
And a thousand times imagined
How she'd blush and turn away.

Time passed on. I came to London
All in haste to see the bride—
Loveliest of Denmark's daughters,
Through the crowded City glide.
'Twas a glorious day for England,
'Twas a joyous day for me,
For by happy chance my Kitty
Was once more my vis-à-vis.

She was sitting on a platform
Very near to Temple Bar,
And with hope and fear I trembled
While I watched her from afar;
Watched her till at last she saw me,
And looked up with glad surprise,
Then, abashed and blushing deeply,
Downward bent her violet eyes.

I could tell she half repented
Giving me a look so sweet;
In that sudden recognition,
How it made my pulses beat!
How she tried to look unconscious
Of my fond and earnest gaze,
And her long-lashed eyelids quivered
O'er the eyes she would not raise.

With her friends she gaily chatted
Looking glad as glad could be;
Still I hoped that she was thinking
At that very time of me.
Why I dared this hope to cherish
I must own I scarcely knew,
But I know my heart was beating
With a love both strong and true.

After long impatient waiting,
The beloved bride appeared,
With the young and princely bridegroom,
To all English hearts endeared.
When they halted just before us,
Kitty gave one glance at me,
Full of loyalty and feeling,
Full of loving sympathy.
All was over. Little Kitty
From her seat was led away,
And I struggled to the entrance
Hoping she would pass that way.
How I longed for leave to tell her
All my heart would have me say,
How I feared that like a vision
She once more would pass away.

After long impatient waiting
Kitty came, but would not see,
Though I'm sure she felt my presence,
For she turned her face from me.
It was agony to see her
Pass away without a word,
And my heart grew sick and trembling,
Sick and faint with hope deferred.

For a moment I was spell-bound,
Or like one transformed to stone;
But I roused myself to follow
Where my heart and thoughts had flown.
Suddenly a voice cried, 'Harry!
Who'd have thought of seeing you?
Come and dine with us, old fellow,
If you've nothing else to do.

'George will be so glad to see you
At his house in Sussex Square;
We have quite a merry party,
All the girls are staying there.
You will hardly know my sisters,
You've not seen them such a while.
Isn't Alexandra lovely?
Doesn't she know how to smile?

'I was at the railway station,
And I had a splendid view;
But my sisters and my cousins
Were in Fleet Street;—where were you?
Thus my old friend Charley chatted,
While we slowly made our way
Through the streets so gaily crowded
On that memorable day.

We were rather late for dinner,
But they soon made room for me,
And I saw that little Kitty
Was once more my *vis-à-vis*.
To the friendly greetings round me
I could scarcely make replies,
For I felt too much bewildered,
And could hardly trust my eyes,

Kitty's face looked grave with wonder,
And her sweet eyes seemed to say,
'Do not let my cousins fancy
We have met before to-day.'
So I tried to pay attention
To the lady by my side,
Talking of the royal marriage
And the young and lovely bride.

I was glad when we were summoned
To the drawing-room for tea;
But among the fair young faces
Kitty's face I could not see.
Charley found her in a corner,
And he caught her by a curl,
Saying, 'This is Kitty Lucas,
'Uncle George's youngest girl.

'Kitty, why have you been hiding?
This is Captain Harry Blair;
He was my best friend at Eton,
All the while that I was there.'
Kitty said, with easy freedom,
As she gave her hand to me,
'Any friend of Cousin Charley
I am very glad to see.'

(She pretended not to fathom
All my love and my delight,
Though I'm sure she knew I wanted
To propose that very night.)
Then she asked a dozen questions,
All about the fair Princess:
'Do you think her very pretty?
Did you like her style of dress?

'Did you see her queenly forehead?
And her sweet and friendly smile?
Did you notice Albert Edward,
How he watched her all the while?
I have heard she calls him "*Bertie*,"
And I really think it's true,
For no doubt they love each other
Just as other people do.'

Thus she chatted. On our spirits
What a sudden change had come!
Now, with seeming ease and freedom,
She could speak, while I was dumb.
Restless hope and joy had driven
All my measured words away:
While I sat in troubled silence
From my side she stole away.

Stole away to join the dancers,
And I watched—till jealous pain,
Strong and sharp, revived my courage,
And I sought her out again.
Then I asked if she remembered
When and where we first had met;
And her ready, 'I remember'
In my ears is ringing yet.

'I remember, 'twas last summer,
And you wore an Albert chain,
Like the one I gave to Charley
Just before he went to Spain.
In your hand you held a volume
Written by a friend of mine,
And you did not seem to like it,
For you scarcely read a line.'

Thus with playful ease she chatted
Just to keep me still at bay,
And half vexed, half charmed, I listened,
Till at last I dared to say:
'Did you hear the prayer I uttered,
That we two might meet again?
Kitty, now the prayer is answered,
Tell me, is it all in vain?

'Kitty, do not speak so gaily,
Do not look so much at ease.'
Then she answered, archly smiling,
'You are very hard to please.'
But her voice began to falter:
She grew timid, I grew bold;
And that night before we parted,
I my tale of love had told.

Of the happy days that followed
Scarce a word I dare to say.
Kitty whispered that she loved me,
'Ere a month had passed away;
With love-light her eyes were beaming,
With new joy my heart was stirred,
And her hand in mine was trembling,
When she spoke she whispered word.

Kitty's love was worth the winning,
Kitty's all the world to me;
Kitty says, through life's long journey,
She will be my *vis-à-vis*.
We are happy, we are hopeful,
We are waiting for the spring,
Then the old church-bells at Dover,
With a merry peal shall ring.

M. E. R.

JACK EASEL AT PEBBLESEA;

AND HIS ADVENTURE WITH MRS. BLENKINSOP.

I THINK there are few sensations more pleasant than that which one experiences on awaking the first morning of a sea-side holiday, after, say, eleven months of London work. The delicious feeling of irresponsibility, the consciousness that you may lie as long as you like in bed (invariably accompanied by a desire to get up as soon as possible), that you may sit at breakfast and spell over the 'Times' as long as you please, that you needn't rush off to catch that dreadful up-train or 'City Atlas,' which has been hurrying you day after day for ever so long past to your office, counting-house, chambers, or what not; that there is no noise of trundling wheels outside your bedroom window, but a soothing, blissful silence, only broken now and then by the chirping and twittering of birds, or the hum of insect life. Add to these conditions (for we may as well complete the picture), that the sunlight is streaming in cheerfully through the open casement, that you have been sleeping on the fairest of linen sheets under the whitest of dimity curtains, that your sponge-bath is wide and capacious, and that Betty has just knocked at the door with your shaving-water, and, I ask, what is wanting to complete your happiness?

At least, I can answer for my own, when, on the —th of last month, I descended the stairs of Mrs. Lympett's lodgings at Pebblesea-super-Mare, about nine o'clock, A.M., and found in a cosy little room on the ground floor a table covered with marine and other luxuries for my morning repast.

If Mrs. L. needed the testimony of this poor quill to establish her reputation as a landlady, how willingly would I record the excellence of her coffee, the unexceptionable quality of her broiled ham, the genuine freshness of her butter, the new-born innocence of her eggs, the artistic preparation of her muffins, the delicate hues of her dry toast, the recent capture of her shrimps,

the snowy brightness of her table-cloths; but these are facts well known to the frequenters of Pebblesea, and why should I enlarge upon them? I finish my breakfast, fill my cigar-case from a box of Hooker and Honeydew's choicest Havannahs (without which I never travel), thrust the 'Times' in my pocket, and stroll down towards the beach.

Pebblesea is a famous place for bathing. The women are always at it, from seven A.M. up to noon, and sometimes afterwards, and the men, I am sorry to add, are nearly always looking on. I suppose it is an acquired taste; but, to my mind, a lady in a blue serge dress and night-cap, holding on tight by a rope's end, and bobbing violently up and down in about eighteen inches of water, may be a curious and impressive, but is hardly a fascinating spectacle. It is a remarkable fact, moreover, that the nymphs who retain this amphibious appearance longest and with the most apparent abandon, are, as a rule, rather on the wrong side of forty than the right. I would not for worlds draw any ungenerous inference from this fact, which I merely mention as a matter of statistics.

Along the beach, then, and close to the water's edge, is a row of newly-painted bathing machines inscribed with the names

'H. & T. Blowhard, successors to
Fanny Souswell,'

presided over by sturdy matrons, clad in a series of blue petticoats, a bonnet-shade, and no stockings, who bustle about with relays of bathing-dresses, and are continually hooking or unhooking a rope from behind their cars before they are pulled up from or lowered towards the sea. After their bath, the youngest ladies have a habit of sitting about on the steps and wheels of the machines in picturesque but rather precarious positions, with no other apparent object than that of drying their hair, or

reading the last new novel. Whether they are restrained by motives of economy from using the benches placed for the accommodation of the public at one penny per head, is more than I can say; but those seats are deserted except by a few old fogeys in yellow leather slippers, the majority of visitors evidently preferring to recline on the beach itself, and, indeed, such is the force of example, that I, too, was soon sprawling on the shingle.

No sooner have I taken up my position, than I am surrounded by some of those innumerable vendors of small wares, who, by long and ancient usage, have a right of way over every gentleman's legs if he is lying (or path, if he is walking) on the sad sea shore. First, there is the bull's-eye and sugar-stick merchant in a blue velvet cap, with a gold tassel and a white apron, holding a mahogany box with a glass top, like a little zoological table-case from the British Museum. Then come the youthful newsagents with their "Daily Taily-grawf," sir, "Stended," sir, "Mawning Stor," "full account of a horrible murder, sir," 'latest 'lectioneering intelligence, sir,' 'nother hawful railway accident,' and so forth. To them succeed male and female fruit merchants, who seem to recommend their goods as if the excellence of the latter depended on the day of the week, and as if every day of the week insured more excellence than the last. 'Fine cherries, my dear, this morning,' 'nice apples and pears this morning, sir,' 'first-rate strawberries, mum, to-day.' I shake my head with an impatient gesture, and, forthwith, a heavy basket is deposited on my other side filled with an endless variety of domestic articles ranging from flat pin-cushions up to a dressing-case, all made of shells glued together in the most ingenious and inconvenient manner, and retaining a strong odour of stale oysters. Having feebly expressed my indifference to this conchological display, I am next attacked by a gentleman whose huge burden of coloured air-balls floating about his head and behind

his back makes it difficult to conceive (in the absence of any scientific information on the subject) how he can keep his legs on the ground at all, and induces a vague hope on my part that some unforeseen influence in the aerostatic way will carry him far out to sea with the next breeze. This terrible retribution, however, is rendered unnecessary by his floating quietly away on shore and leaving me to the mercies of a yellow bootmaker, or, rather, a maker of yellow leather boots and tortoise-shell combs, who being probably aware that his commodities are far inferior to those which can be bought in the shops, straightway demands twice their usual price.

The importunities of my Israelitish friend are no sooner resisted than a Savoyard boy with a guinea-pig under each arm, and a white mouse emerging from the recesses of his trouser pocket, coolly sits down beside me, uttering a plaintive whine about a 'pover' Italian' s'gnor and a 'mezzo-baioccho,' but with a broad grin on his features, indicative of the utmost pleasantry and good-humour. Now, however fragrant the smell of toasted cheese may be when fresh from the kitchen at Evans's, on a winter's evening, I must confess that in August, by the sea-side, and in addition to the presence of guinea-pigs, it is not to my liking. I therefore start somewhat pettishly to my feet, and attracted by the strains of a nigger band, seek the opposite end of the beach. I remember the time when all the most brilliant and lucrative professions which a fond parent could suggest would have sunk into utter insignificance compared with that of an Ethiopian serenader. To lead a nomad and ever-joyous life—to wear a preposterously long-tailed coat and paper shirt-collars of gigantic size—to assume a complexion of such a dusky hue that (to adopt the Yankee hyperbolism) a black piece of chalk would make a white mark upon it—to thrum the dulcet banjo and wield the merry bones—to be the admiration of an appreciative audience, who would never think of asking me the dative case plural

of *opus*, a work, or what was the capital town of Connecticut—such was the object of my earliest ambition. In maturer life, I confess my respect for this particular class of musical professors has been considerably modified. Their costume (judged by the standard of a more sophisticated taste) seems unnecessarily *bizarre*, and even dirty, their instruments appear somewhat out of tune, their vocal powers are not always of the highest order. I have noticed, too, a slight tendency to coarseness in their wit, which, however excusable in the conceptions of genius, sometimes takes too practical a form to be pleasant. The custom of smearing the face with a composition of lamp-black and tallow is (apart from ethnological considerations) confessedly rather a nasty one, and I fear that the profuse display of ruffles and shirt-front so characteristic of this tribe is not supported by a corresponding abundance of under linen.

With all these drawbacks, however, there is something to my mind rather exhilarating about the performance of a nigger band. The charming little *aria* in which 'Sally' is bidden to 'come up' is generally refreshing to the ear, nor am I at all insensible to the lively excellence of 'Bob Ridley,' especially when accompanied by a 'break-down' chorus. The conductor, too, is generally a great genius in his way, and the happy knack which he usually possesses of rapping intrusive little street-boys' heads with his fiddlestick is always a source of amusement. But I regret to find that the gentleman on whom this pleasant duty devolves has of late years assumed a costume which ill befits his calling. He is got up in a variegated suit with a hump on his back and another proceeding from the region of his waistcoat. His nose is of a highly convex description, and his chin curls up to meet it. He looks, in short, like an overgrown Punch, but lacks that sublime suppleness and happy reversibility of knee-joints which should characterize the hero of our street drama. Indeed, the whole thing is an anomaly. Your legiti-

mate Punch has a diminutive body, with a large head and goggle-eyes always looking in one direction, and yet cognizant of everything going on behind his back, which imparts a wonderful sense of cunning to his features. He grasps his staff, not with his hands but with his arms, and is thus enabled, when occasion requires, to drive it well home into the waistcoat of a recalcitrant headle. But a life-sized Punch—a Punch who wields his *baton* after the fashion of the late M. Jullien, and who looks about him like any other Christian—is in my opinion an *effete* plagiarism—to say nothing of the inevitable law of proportions, which would require a Toby at least as large as a rhinoceros to make him bearable.

Passing then, with a feeling akin to melancholy, from the Ethiopian concert thus conducted, I joined a little group who were watching Signor Beppo and his performing canaries. I call him Signor Beppo, for that was the name inscribed upon his brilliantly-painted caravan; but as he spoke alternately scraps of French, Italian, German, and Irish, you may suppose I was not a little puzzled as to his nationality. Signor Beppo is a gentleman about the middle height, with sandy hair and a freckled complexion. He wears a somewhat dingy, claret-coloured cap with a tarnished gold tassel on his head. The rest of his costume can be ascribed to no particular date or country, but suggests the notion that he has borrowed it partly from the stage tradition of 'Robert Macaire' and partly from the wardrobe of an expatriated Ribbonman. Astonishing as the performance of Signor Beppo's feathered pupils undoubtedly is, there is no doubt that it owes a great deal of its interest to the voluble description of that gentleman himself, who, as he takes one bird after another out of the cage and makes it perform the celebrated feats of firing a pistol, smoking a pipe, and driving a coach-and-four, generally keeps up a running commentary on these phenomena after the following fashion:—

'Now looky 'ere shennlemen,

looky 'ere ladisanshennlemen just a goin' to begin. You shall see all wot you never see before keep back you boys or I break your 'ead so no nonsense looky 'ere looky 'ere. This is—per Bacco shennlemen and no mistake—this is keep a back you boys I say—this is Messer Blondin fust cousin to him wot walks a tightrope at Cristalpalis—floy up you sare floy up I say.' (Here Signor B. takes a moulting canary from the cage, which flutters up a sloping stick to a wire stretched horizontally across the table, hops along it, swings round it by one leg, and clutches a flag convulsively in the other claw.) 'Bravo Messer Blondin! what you say to that gennlemen? diable you little beggare hold on or I'll break every bone in your skin. Now you sare (brings out another bird) come out and make your bow presto presto (rapping the table) make yer bow I say ah you understand I see. This is Chigmarree shennlemen—a wonderful little 'en bird—now you sare monta—monta—sopra I say—Was der teufel—won't you go?—ah I thought you would—that's right' (Chigmarree here hops up a spiral series of cribbage-pegs to the top of a column like an ornithological Simeon Stylites.) 'Now shennlemen—ever you see a bird a smoking? nevare mind you shall now—this is my dear little Chigmarree I love so much—dash you boys keep a back I say—now you sare you take this meerschau and hold up your 'ead.' (At this juncture Signor Beppo stuffs a piece of tinder into the bowl of a small clay pipe, inserts it in the canary's beak, with many imprecations, and finally lights it with a lucifer match: the tinder smokes visibly, to the great delight of all the little boys, but to the manifest indifference of Chigmarree, who looks wistfully back to the cage.) 'Now shennlemen wot you think o' that don't he smoke a beautiful?—don't he smoke like a Prince a Wales?—par exemple—is he right?—or any other bird? Now you sare you're a finished are you—va ben'—sta giu—give me your pipe—wot you're a foightin with Messer Blondin are you? ferma—ferma I say: begor I give you in sharge of pollisman—go a back both o' you

into your cage or you shan't ave no supper to-night!

(Here Signor B. passes round his cap to an admiring crowd, and having collected about two and threepences halfpenny, proceeds with his entertainment.)

'Now shennlemen now shennlemenadis ever you see de Princess Alessandra? No—well then you see her now 'ere's de Princess Alessandra wot travels in coche-an-four looky 'ere shennlemen (small vehicle produced, looking like the model of a hansom cab grafted on a nautilus shell) 'ere's de Princess a Wales—don't she look foine, per Bacco?—a going to Bockingham Pallis in de Bockingham's coach.' (Here the princess, whose court dress consists of a blue silk petticoat tied round her neck, and a pink paper hat gummed on her head, after a great deal of fluttering and agitation is deposited inside the Bockingham's coach, where she proceeds forthwith to regale herself with canary seed.) 'And 'ere's de Bockingham's cocheman and footmen and 'orses—Donner wetter! you talk of performing dog—why he's nothing to this shennlemen—stan' a back you dem' little boys or I fine you two and six penn.'

The process of harnessing having been accomplished, viz., by thrusting four canaries' heads into four little rings connected by string with the State carriage, the coachman and footmen are next encased in cardboard armour painted in imitation of livery, and firmly fixed in their places; Signor Beppo cracks a whip and tells the Bockingham's coachman to 'drive careful,' an injunction which that functionary immediately disregards, by turning his head completely round to the rear. The four steeds, incited by a prospective bait of lump-sugar, hop energetically forward, and the carriage moves along amidst the plaudits of the crowd and a violent chirping of the State footmen. Professor Beppo passes his cap round a second time—with perhaps less pecuniary success, for the audience feel that they will get nothing more for their money—an opinion which the professor at once confirms by moving off to another arena.

All this time the crowd has been increasing along the shore, and a clamour of happy children's voices mingles with the crash and roar of waves upon the shingle. More bathers, more bathing-women, and more spectators. Look at that shameless, red-faced, and capacious-waistcoated Hebrew, with a telescope under his left arm and his hands stuck deliberately in his trouser pockets. A mosaic gilt chain hangs ostentatiously from his fob. I wonder whether there is a watch at the end of it! I should like to pull it out, and show him how long he has been staring at those rosy-cheeked water-nymphs whose long fair hair is floating round their heads. Out upon thee—thou middle-aged and reprehensible Actæon! Would that the antlers of tradition were even now budding from beneath that billy-cock hat of thine, and that the Pebblesen stag-hounds were chasing thee across country! Ah! there is a policeman—a real native 'bobby'—perhaps he will interfere and prevent this lawless intrusion:—yes, he is accosting Actæon—at last then the strong arm of the law will—but, no—by Jove! they are actually joking together, and that scoundrel of a 'crusher' is positively looking on himself. Surely the young ladies will cease bathing now. No, not a bit of it—they seem perfectly indifferent to the matter, and keep bobbing up and down, like ethereal Jacks (or rather Jills) in the box.

'Well, the boldness of some people surpasses anything I ever saw,' observes Mrs. Wigley (head nurse in Lady Trumpington's establishment) to Miss Matilderann as they sit together on the beach, watching their little charges—'did you hever?'

'No, I never, mum, upon me word,' replies Matilderann; and forthwith these ladies fall to discussing the frailties and shortcomings of their own sex, which as Mrs. W. is past the meridian of life, and her companion the reverse of beautiful, I promise you receives little mercy at their hands.

Meanwhile, Masters Frank and

'Enery, with their companions, disport themselves on the sand, constructing mimic forts and batteries of that fragile material—sinking a formidable moat of which the escarp side is at least six inches deep, and filling it with sea-water by means of little buckets—an exciting pastime, inasmuch as the tide is coming in higher and higher every minute, and sometimes washes over those tiny chamois leather boots already filled with a curious compound of gravel and seaweed.

'But law bless you, my dear, it don't do them no 'arm,' observes Mrs. Wigley, 'even if they are in a perspiration. "Salt water," as Mr. Squills, our chemist, was saying to me, this morning, "salt water, mum, can hurt no one at this season of the year, except when taken internally, when I've known it act, in large doses, as hermetical."'

So the digging and splashing, and running to and fro, and hurrying and general insubordination goes on uninterruptedly all the morning. There's no help for it—in fact I'm not sure that there *ought* to be any help for it by the sea-side. Leave discipline for the school-room, and let them exercise their little muscles and lungs here as much as they like. You can't bring up all children like the good little boys and girls in Mrs. Barbauld's books, which you and I, dear reader (we will presume you are approaching the age of thirty), perused when we wore pinafores. Indeed I don't think there are such books now. I remember a dreadfully proper little periodical called the 'Children's Friend,'—the very quintessence of cheap morality and mawkish sentiment, which was in vogue in my nursery days. Well, in this good little book there was a good little story about an impossibly good little boy who met with sore temptation in the shape of a sweet almond, or a Turkey fig, or a lump of sugar which lay unclaimed in some chance place, and which, if he had been a child of any spirit—indeed if he had been a real child at all—he would at once have eaten. But instead of thus following the healthy instincts of his childish

nature, this precious infant began to reflect on all the precepts he had read in the 'Children's Friend,' and so came to think that the Prince of Darkness was actually at his elbow, prompting him to steal that Turkey fig. And so he went, with tears in his eyes, and conveyed this alarming intelligence to his mamma, or the grocer—I forget which—and received the highest approbation for his integrity, and the Turkey fig into the bargain. And he ate it of course straightway with a grateful heart; and all I can say is, that if ever there was such a child, I hope it gave him the toothache; for a more monstrous piece of affectation I never knew. But the truth is, this phenomenon of infantile probity was a myth; and as a boy myself I saw that he was a myth, and felt indignant at the pious imposition.

Turning these things over in my mind, I was reflecting as I walked homewards on the difference between nursery education now and a quarter of a century ago, when my eye was arrested by a placard affixed to the Pebblesa Club-house. At the top of this placard was printed the profile likeness of a human head, the upper part of which was mapped out into some thirty divisions, each containing a little picture of either an allegorical or domestic subject, and duly numbered, so as to correspond with a description below. It was, in short, a phrenological chart, setting forth all the attributes of good or evil which form the character of man with great accuracy and in the most glowing colours. Thus Causality was indicated by a likeness of Sir Isaac Newton in a very blue coat and white trousers, looking up at an apple which was falling from a tree straight down upon his nose. There was Adhesiveness, or Friendship, symbolised by two young ladies dressed respectively in crimson and green, with their arms round each other's necks; Firmness, by a donkey refusing to budge although vehemently thrashed fore and aft by costermongers; Constructiveness, by a mechanic embracing two cog-wheels; Approbativeness, by a

youth taking off his hat to a friend in pink; Destructiveness, by a tiger pursuing its prey; and Love, by a little boy lying asleep on a mossy bank with nothing on but a lighted torch. Without enumerating any more of these illustrated qualities, I may add that the beauty of the profile on which they were depicted was enhanced by a complexion of surpassing loveliness, that the text which accompanied this useful diagram was exceedingly erudite and diffuse in its explanations, and that finally the public were recommended to seek further enlightenment on the subject of phrenology from Mrs. Blenkinsop, who was making a limited stay at Pebblesa, in consequence of numerous engagements with the aristocracy elsewhere.

This was an opportunity too good to be lost. I immediately made up my mind to call on this female phrenologist, and ascertain my character and hers at the same time. The address was No. 9 Union Street, and in a few minutes I was at the door inquiring for Mrs. B.

'Will you please to walk up, sir?' said a rather slatternly servant who answered the bell. 'The lady will see you in a minute.' And presently in 'the lady' came.

She was a fat and rather melancholy-looking woman about fifty years of age, dressed in a seedy black satin gown, with mittens on her hands and a black cap upon her head decorated with a profusion of vitreous ornament, known in the milliner's vocabulary, I believe, as 'bugles.'

'Mrs. Blenkinsop,' said I, bowing. 'I am making a short visit to Pebblesa, and having—ahem!—having accidentally heard of your being here, I—'

'Accidentally! sir,' said Mrs. Blenkinsop—'that can hardly be—at least if you move in circles—'

I assured her that, so far from moving in circles, I did not know a soul in the place but my landlady.

'In that case,' rejoined Mrs. B., 'I can understand your expression—but yet surely if you are from London the name of Blenkinsop—'

'I fancy I have heard it before,' said I.

'At the Hoxton Mechanics' Institute,' said Mrs. B. gravely, 'at the Pentonville Proprietary College, at the Islington Hathenaeum, at the Camberwell Dillytany Club, and at the Balls-Pond-Band-of-Ope Society's Rooms, I've lectured to overflowing 'ouses.'

I regretted that, not having been familiar with either of those institutions, I had lost so great a pleasure, and then informed her of the object of my visit.

'Is it the character in full?' asked Mrs. Blenkinsop, 'or only the principal organs?'

'You must excuse me,' I said, 'if I don't quite understand your meaning.'

'Why, you see,' observed the female phrenologist, with a business-like air, 'the character complete, with a symbolical 'ead included, is five shillings; but the principal organs is arf-a-crown.'

I told her that I thought I should prefer the character in full, and prepared for the operation as if I was going to have a tooth drawn.

'And I think you're right, young man,' said Mrs. Blenkinsop. 'It's worth the difference, I assure you; and yours aint a common 'ead by no means. Reflective faculties well developed, I see; good deal of indivisality too; you've learnt a precious sight more by observation than ever you got out of books, hay?'

This was a tolerably fair shot, and I betrayed myself by bursting out into a laugh. The old lady saw she had made a good start, and went on pawing and thrumming on my head, talking all the while, except when she took up a pen to fill up a printed form on the table.

'Very little Caution here, sir, I'm afraid. Benevolence isn't half full enough, and Love of Approbation is much too full. Let me see: Acquisitiveness—desire to acquire and possess—frugality—parsimoniousness—thrift—'

'Really, Mrs. Blenkinsop——' said I, in some confusion.

'Needn't be afraid, young man, it's not at all a bad quality when

kep in subjection; in fact, very useful to them as wish to get on in the world. But you 'aven't any to speak of. I dare say now you was a very extravagant gent at college?'

I told her I hadn't had a University education.

'More's the pity,' ejaculated my phrenological torturer, 'more's the pity. I think every young man ought to go to college—at least, if he intends to move in circles. I like Oxford and Cambridge, and all them collegiate towns. I like all intelleckshial places. I've known several Oxonians in my time, and felt scores of 'eads down there, and very grateful some of them was, I can tell you!'

'Grateful—for what?' said I.

'Why, for the advice I giv 'em,' rejoined Mrs. B. 'There was one young man's cerebral diagnosis I took in his first term; plenty of ability had that youth, but no application. "Well, what d'ye think of my nob, mum?" says he. "Which nob, sir?" says I, thinking of course he alluded to an organ. Well, he bust out laughing, *youth like*. "I see you don't understand," says he; "I mean my head and its capabilities!" "Sir," says I, "you've plenty of perception, but what you want—I tell you plain—is concentrativeness, unity, continoity of thought and feeling; disposition to dwell on one subject until it's completed." "Right you are, I really think, mum," says he; "but is this quality to be cultivated?" "Of course it is," says I, "if you set your mind upon it." And so we parted; but my last words was, "Cultivate your concentrativeness." Well, I didn't go down to Oxford till nearly twelve months afterwards, and one of the fust of the collegians who called on me was that young man. Of course I was very much pleased to see him, as I always am to see any of my former patients; and I'm sure he seemed delighted equal. "Oh, Mrs. Blenkinsop, mem," he says, "I'm so greatly indebted to you. You remember that you told me I was wanting in concentrativeness, but that I could cultivate it if I tried." "Perfectly well, sir!" says I. "Well," he says, "I've

taken your advice and have tried, and what *do* you think is the result?" "Why, that's for you to tell me, sir," says I, fancying, of course, that he had come out as a double fust wrangler, or something of that kind. "Why, the result is, Mrs. Blinkinsop, mom," he says, "that the bump (which you told me was at the back of my head) is so much developed, that I've been obliged to order A NEW HAT!" And if that's not a curious thing, sir, I don't know a curiouseer."

"Well, it does seem very singular!" said I. "May I inquire the gentleman's name?"

"Hopkins, sir," said Mrs. Blinkinsop; "and I *did* hear afterwards that many of the stoo-dents there were so struck with the circumstance of his having so quickly developed the concentrative faculty, that they called him "Concentrated Hops" ever afterwards. But those Oxonians will have their jokes, sir!"

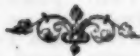
"Of course," said I, suspecting, I must confess at that moment, the joke had a deeper origin than poor Mrs. B. wist of.

Well, the manipulation of my head, which had been going on during the intervals of our conversation, was now concluded, and all that remained to be done was to draw up a general synopsis of my character. If Mrs. Blinkinsop's phrenology did not help her to arrive at quite as correct an estimate of my qualities as could be wished, let us charitably suppose that it is the theory which is imperfect, and not her practice which was at fault. A more extraordinary amalgamation

of natural science and grammatical ignorance, of the grand and the common-place, of the sublime and the ridiculous, never met, I believe, in any woman of her age. I paid my five shillings with the utmost good-humour, and wished every crown I had spent had procured me such a fund of amusement. Besides, the good lady made it a profession. *She must* believe in it; no one who had not a faith in phrenology would go on day after day feeling the polls of foolish young gentlemen and fumbling the wigs of aged spinsters. It is a profession—a trade if you will—and as such must be respected. If I am paid for painting a head, and Chippenham for carving it, who shall prevent this good old body from getting her modest *honorarium* for pinching it all over? Let us live and let live.

This paper will be read perhaps by holiday folks who are dispersed on various errands of pleasure all over the British isles—by Tom lolling in a first-class carriage on his way to the lakes, by Dick on board his yacht off the pleasant Southern coast, by Harry over his breakfast at the 'Royal Oak,' Bettws. Dainty little ladies may turn over the leaves as they recline by the sea-side after their morning dip. Even Paterfamilias may condescend to forget business, politics, cares of wealth and ambition, in an endeavour to be simply amused. It was a wise man who wrote '*dulce est desipere in loco.*' Let me hope my gossip is not out of season.

JACK EASEL.



WANTED—A CURATE.



WAS there ever a more miserable case than mine? I am a rector in search of a curate. Do I hear the public say, it is easy to find what you seek, your case is not a pitiable one?

Oh! cruel British public, prone to jump at hasty conclusions, slow to confess an error in judgment. I will lay before your tribunal a statement, a true unvarnished statement, of my trials, and will receive from your mature judgment a verdict whether I deserve your pity or your censure.

I am a rector of an agricultural village in the county of Cheshire, this county of rich meadows, fat kine, and noble cheeses. I have had a fair share of the temporal advantages our Church has to bestow; in fact, I belong to the upper ten thousand amongst the servants of the Church.

My church is a handsome building, at least, so I thought, when I

read myself in some thirty years ago, and after the ceremony was over, looked around me to see what was the condition of my new possessions.

My church had a handsome venerable exterior. The ivy, which encircled the well-built tower, was decidedly ornamental. In those days I was told ivy caused damp, by retaining the wet in the outer walls of the church, so I gave the order for the ivy to be removed. My wife and I differed on that subject; but when I said to her in a reproving tone, 'My dear, attend to your department, and I will attend to mine,' she offered no further remonstrances. Now, however, I am told that ivy is a preservative against damp, and is as useful as it is ornamental to the exterior of churches.

My church had recently been restored. If the youth of the British public are listening to my com-

plaint, there will at once rise before them visions of scraped stone walls, recovered piscinas, ornamented capitals laid bare, galleries removed, and open free seats, to which all alike are bidden.

Forty years ago, restorations meant healthy, clean plaster, which concealed the nakedness of the stone walls, even when it did deaden the edge of carvings; it meant row after row of tidy pews, a good height from the ground, with the name of the owner painted in white letters upon the door.

The squire's pew and the rector's pew were raised a step above the others, and were neatly covered with scarlet cloth. Before you reached the chancel step, you came to a desk for the clerk; a step higher was my reading-desk, and thence I stepped up into the pulpit, an elevated erection, surmounted by a sounding-board, where the chief part of my congregation faced me from the newly added and favourite seat—the gallery. My church was clean, commodious, and satisfactory in my eyes. Forty years have made many changes; however, I refrain from dwelling on the remarks, that I have been compelled to listen to, respecting my church during these last two years.

Mackworth is a pretty village. The rectory-house stands on the brow of a hill; the grounds are extensive, and repay me for thirty years of attention. I was fortunate in the wife whom I chose, to share with me my rectory; my table was surrounded by six olive branches. My olive branches all belong to that sex, which remains longest in the parent nest. Lingered blessings are preferable to those of shorter duration; and though I may at times have echoed my wife's wish, that others would covet the possessions of the treasures, which Mackworth rectory contained, I do not know which I could most easily spare—Hester or Jane, Clare or Mary, Constance or my youngest Olive.

I believed myself to be master in my own house for many years, until my daughter Olive was emancipated from school-room authority.

My wife and I pulled together; I resisted the various efforts of my five elder daughters, each in their different ways, to assume an undue influence in my family, with success: but I feel I must yield to that unscrupulous tyranny, which a youngest daughter so often exercises over her father. In public I resist, and in public I have not laid down my arms; but in the privacy of my own sanctum, I own that I am under her thralldom, and her rule is not gentle. What can a poor man do? I cannot move about as lightly as I could some thirty years ago, my breathing is not as easy, my wind not so good. When I resolve I will assert my parental authority, and say in a stern voice,—

'Olive, I insist upon that not being done; I will not have you walk five miles before luncheon to see your dearest friend, Sybilla Grey, when you know that for any other purpose a three miles' walk would tire you.'

I say this with as grave and forbidding a mien as my features can be made to assume. What is the reply?

Probably I am seated at the bottom of the table, eating my breakfast, my daughter rises from her chair, seizes me by the throat, covers my bald head with kisses, and regardless of the gurgling noise in my throat, expressive of suffocation, says, 'Will you say that again? Will you say I may do just what I like? Say yes?'

Each of these questions is followed by a tighter clasp of her white hands, which, though soft enough to look at, have, I can assure you, some force in their grasp. Be quiet, Olive, be quiet, sit down, I gasp during this domestic garotting.

Another pressure, another shower of kisses, my face is blue, and I yield.

'Yes, yes, Olive, I am choking; anything for peace's sake!'

She loosens her hold and reseats herself with a smiling face.

It requires some courage to expose one's self, at my age, to attacks such as these. I yield the point, and allow her to go her own way; truly thankful I should be, if she would allow me to go mine. But

no, indeed; Olive has very decided opinions on most subjects, especially on all ecclesiastical subjects. She is a walking glossary of ecclesiastical terms. In the knowledge of church ornaments, of clerical vestments, the church's colours for the church's seasons, of every rubrical nicety; in fact, in every point of that newly revived science, the science of Ritualism, my daughter will be found completely informed. With the energy of youth she rides her hobby horse unmercifully. That courage, perseverance, energy, and zeal with which the present generation take up some new idea, is fatiguing to us, who have experienced more of the changes of this life; we cannot believe, with the blind faith which they expect from us, that the whole world is to be converted by a greater regard to the church's seasons, by guilds, by confraternities, by sisterhoods, and by all those endeavours which Olive believes will have regenerated the mass of our population if persevered in, for a few years longer.

'Means to an end, my dear,' is what I say to her; 'Means to an end,—the same great end for which Christians have toiled and struggled against the world, for the last nineteen centuries.'

'That is all I contend for,' replied Olive, who enjoys, in common with most of her sex, the peculiarity of never being convinced, and rarely silenced; 'it is not the dress in itself that I cavil at, when I object to your black neck-tie, or your loose shooting-coat; it is the principle, for which I contend, that the clergy should adopt a special dress to mark their profession. Suitable dress is one great means of commanding respect, and I would have you wear the long black coat, straight buttoned down the front, the plain white cravat fastened behind, because they betoken your profession, and show that at no hour of the day you forget the work of your life.'

I quote Olive's words,—she has a wonderful flow of words.

My dress is a sorely contested point between Olive and me. She would have me always dressed in a

suit of black of the most approved clerical cut; she would never permit the easy checked handkerchief round my neck. I must always appear in armour, cased in a stiff white cravat. She does allow what she calls a clerical wide-awake. I believe what she aims at is, that at all times, even when feeding my poultry, and walking about my garden at an early hour, I should appear in Cassock and Biretta.

I have pet poultry, pet starlings, pet robins, blackbirds which fly about me as soon as I come out. I love my Aylesbury ducks, and my ducks love me; I have guinea fowls, which cry 'come back, come back,' to me; I have a retriever which never leaves my feet, study cats, garden cats and stable cats, a tame pigeon, which perches on the top of my head; in fact, pets innumerable, ranking from the mouse, which creeps out of the hole in the wainscoting of my study, to the village urchins before their school days commence. All these pets must be fed. My shooting-coat contains capacious pockets, which hold crumbs for the birds, barley for the pigeons, young carrots, grain, acorns, and sugar candy to supply the appetite of the young of Nature.

Picture to yourself a cassock, or even a clerical coat being emptied of that accumulation of food! I may yield in many points to the pressure of the times—from my easy dress death shall alone divide me. But I wander from my subject.

Two years ago my troubles commenced, troubles to which I can see no termination. I have enjoyed sixty-seven years of robust health, but the enemy has found me out at last. Gout has for generations been an hereditary enemy of my family. My first attack was a severe one. It continued, and has resolved itself into spasmodic gout. The doctor said, as doctors always do, 'Perfect repose is necessary to Mr. Hargreave's recovery. No exertion, no excitement whatever.'

'Do you wish to say,' inquired my anxious wife, 'that Mr. Hargreave must not continue to serve his parish; do you forbid his Sunday duty?'

The great man humm'd and haw'd; 'You see, Madam,' he said deliberately, 'if Mr. Hargreave is one of those composed, calm preachers, who lead the souls of their people heavenwards by the weekly applications of an address, which acts as a soothing draught to their minds, I sanction his continuing to occupy his pulpit; it will act as a gentle stimulant upon him. If, on the other hand, he belongs to the class of preachers who storm, who threaten, who through much violence will drive their people in the right way, I must at once forbid his preaching, or taking any part in parish matters.'

My wife looked indignant. 'Your description does not apply to my husband, but I see it will be desirable for him at once to secure the assistance of a curate.'

My wife would not have allowed for all the world, that a parishioner of mine had ever been seen nodding during one of my sermons. I am inclined to think it must be a clerical elysium, where farmers are never found sleeping during a sermon.

My health continued indifferent, and every exertion was made to find for the parish of Mackworth a suitable curate. I intended to be fastidious in my choice. I was fond of my people at Mackworth, and a little new life amongst them might be beneficial. 'It will not be necessary to advertise, papa; you can answer advertisements.' The 'Guardian' and the 'Ecclesiastical Gazette' were our weekly study. Olive receives from Sybilla Grey the 'Church Review' and the 'Church Times'; she insisted on replying to those advertisements in them, which she thought likely to suit.

'A Catholic Priest wants work. Daily Service, Weekly Communion.' 'Anglo-Catholic Priest seeks a curacy. Sole charge preferred. The Church's teaching fully carried out. Constant Services; hard work desired.'

There were many such advertisements from men, to whom hard work seemed a desideratum; but who all evidently preferred their own way, and were not desirous to

be benefited by the experience of a former generation.

I believe it is Fenelon, the wise author of 'Telemachus,' who says, 'Youth is presumptuous;' the longer I live, the more true I discover his words to be. We replied to many such advertisements; most of our letters brought no reply. Here and there one nibbled; but from one cause or another our negotiations were always broken off.

A month had elapsed; I had about wearied the good nature of the neighbouring clergy, who had by turns taken my Sunday duty for me. My need became imperative. I sent an advertisement to the 'Guardian.'

'Wanted immediately, a Curate for a parish in Cheshire. Pop. 1600; desirable residence; invalid Rector. A temporary engagement may be formed.'

My advertisement appeared in Wednesday's 'Guardian'; on the Saturday I received an answer.

Our letters are public property at the breakfast table—at least, mine and my wife's are. I do see my daughters slip closely written pages into their pockets for undisturbed perusal at their leisure; but I am not curious to know the young lady reflections of Sybilla, Angelina, Charlotte, &c. My wife reads the letter first, and simply says, 'You had better at once close with him; the engagement is to be by the Sunday, at first.'

Jane says, 'What a handwriting; it might be the letter of some ill-taught boarding school Miss of sixteen.'

Margaret exclaims, 'Do you see the crest, two griffins and a lion rampant! He must be the descendant of a hundred knights.'

Said Olive, 'You will write to him, will you, papa? but say decidedly, you wish his engagement with you to be a temporary one. I am certain from that letter he is a man of no decision or weight. In my mind's eye I see this Mr. Green standing before me, and he will be no acquisition to Mackworth.'

'How can you jump so hastily at conclusions, my dear?' says her mother reprovingly.



THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE

Revue de la Presse

The good new hum'd and haw'd, 'Tis my Bladon,' he said deliberately. 'Mr. Hargreave is one of those composed, calm preachers, who, and the souls of their people towards by the weekly appearance of an address, which, sets at a seething draught to their minds, I sanction his continuing to do so; his guilt; it will set on a steady stimulus upon him. If, on the other hand, he belongs to the class of preachers who stare, who threaten, who through much violence will drive their people in the right way, I must at once forbid his preaching, or taking any part in parish matters.'

My wife looked indignant. 'Your description does not apply to my husband, but I see it will be desirable for him at once to accept the situation of a curate.'

'All right, would not that please you?' she said. 'I will at once write to him, and he will at once accept the situation of a curate.'

My husband, however, was not so easily won, and every reason was made to fail for the parish of Blackwater, a miserable estate. I intended to be faithful in my choice. I was fond of my people at Blackwater, and a little new life amongst them might be beneficial. 'It will not be necessary to advertise, papa; you are always advertised. The "Church Times," and the "Ecumenical Chronicle," will do me a study. Olive reads, with a new love, the "Church Times," and the "Ecumenical Chronicle," and she will be replying to those advertisements of them, which she thought me to suit.'

'A Catholic Priest, want, want, Daily Service, Weekly Communion.'

'Anglo-Catholic Priest, want, a curacy, Bois charge preferred. The Church's teaching daily carried out. Constant Services, hard work desired.'

There were many such advertisements from men, to whom hard work seemed a desideratum, but who all evidently preferred their own way, and were not desirous to

be benefited by the experience of a former generation.

I believe it is Fensdon, the wise author of 'Tremulous,' who says, 'Youth is pastime, and the longer I live, the more true I discover his words to be. He replied to every such advertisement sent to our letters brought me every day, and there one nibbled, but from one cause or another our negotiations were always broken off.'

A month had elapsed; I had almost worried the good nature of the neighbouring clergy, who had to some taken my Sunday duty for me. My next became imperative. I sent an advertisement to the "Church Times."

'Wanted immediately, a Curate for a parish in Cheshire. Populous; desirable residence; invalid curacy. A temporary engagement may be accepted.'

The advertisement appeared in the "Church Times," and the first day I received an answer.

'I have seen your prospect of a curacy, and at last, after all my waiting, I do see my chance. I have written your name in my pocket for undisturbed perusal at their leisure; but I am not anxious to know the young lady's reflections of Kydella, Angelina, Charlotte, &c. My wife reads the letter first, and simply says, "You had better at once close with him; the engagement is to be by the church, at first."

Then she says, "What a handwriting! It looks like the scrawl of some illiterate scoundrel who has a notion of a hundred knights."

Myself, however, 'Do you see me, and two griffin and a lion rampant? He must be the descendant of a hundred knights.'

And Olive, 'You will write to him, will you, papa? but say so, say so, say so, with his engagement with you to be a temporary one. I am certain from that hour to a man of no decision or worth. In my mind's eye I see this ill-drawn standing before me, and he will be no acquisition to Blackwater.'

'How can you form so hastily at conclusions, my dear?' says her brother reproachfully.



Drawn by G. du Maurier.

RATHER AN ORDEAL FOR THE REV. MR. GREEN.

[See p. 135.]

[illegible]

The first of these is the fact that the
 government has been unable to raise the
 necessary funds to meet its obligations.
 This is due to a number of factors, including
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 factors, including the fact that the
 government has been unable to raise the
 necessary funds to meet its obligations.

'I see,' said Olive, 'a small slender man in rusty black, with a narrow white tie, a pale yellowish face, long lank black hair, and soft limp hands, a weak voice, and an undecided manner.'

'How very absurd you are, Olive!' says my wife. 'Wait and see,' said Olive confidently. 'Papa must have some one before next Sunday, so had I not better at once write to him in your name?'

Olive was my amanuensis; she spent her mornings usually with me, and used her power by making me more attentive to business, than I must confess I had ever been before.

On Friday morning Mr. Green arrived; I introduced him at luncheon to my wife and daughters. A smile stole over the face of Olive, and she threw a triumphant glance towards me as I said, 'Mr. Green;' for he was very short—Olive's head towered above him—very slightly built, pale and sickly in appearance. His coarse black hair hung straight about his face; he had the weakest of voices, which he cleared each time he began to speak. A pair of green spectacles added the finishing touch to his appearance. Perhaps, poor man, he was conscious of his personal defects; for his shyness was oppressive.

My wife began to make a little conversation, but before the close of the meal, we saw, the kinder part would be to leave him to himself.

'Now, Mr. Green,' I said to him the following morning, 'I hope you will make yourself quite at home. This dining-room is unoccupied all the mornings, and is at your service for any studies you may wish to pursue.' For Mr. Green had the appearance of a man who devoted those hours to study which ought to be devoted to sleep.

'Thank you, sir,' was his meek reply.

At half-past ten that morning, and at the same hour every other morning during his stay with us, Mr. Green entered the drawing-room, seated himself in an arm-chair near to the fire, held an unopened book in one hand (the other he allowed to hang listlessly over

the arm of the chair), and watched the various occupations of my daughters, without volunteering a single remark. If they addressed him, he answered by a monosyllable.

The infliction of such an incubus on my daughters was dreadful; by every means their ingenuity could devise, they sought to convey to him that his presence was an intrusion, but without success. One day they practised music, and singing scales, making a noise so alarming, that I should have thought the fear of a repetition would have kept any one with ears from their presence. Another day they would all be silent. Another morning they would find some occupation in the village, and leave the drawing-room empty. But every effort was fruitless. They could not request a guest to leave the room, and nothing short of such a step would have been successful. Olive sat in my room and laughed at her sisters' perplexity. Mackworth did not afford any furnished lodgings; so that our curate would be obliged to reside with us. But as he had two rooms placed at his disposal, we hoped, except at meal times and in the evenings, to be all of us free to follow our various occupations. Alas! that my chief occupation should be sitting over the fire with aching bones, wishing that I were living in a milder climate.

Sunday morning dawned. I was curious to hear what my parishioners would say of their new curate.

Mr. Green proceeded slowly through the Morning Service, yet in the weakest of voices, scarcely audible ten yards from the reading-desk. He read with pain to himself, easing his voice at every opportunity. It appeared to me that he had been well taught, and had laboured successfully to overcome some impediment in his speech.

The hymn was concluded; the female portion of my flock shook out their dresses, and made a mysterious rustling of silks and ribbon, symptomatic of giving their undivided attention.

I did not anticipate much from the voice or matter of the preacher.

But seldom have I been taken more by surprise than by Mr. Green, when with a stentorian voice he began his sermon. We all looked at each other. Where did such a voice come from? Surely not from the puny frame in the pulpit. And why had we not heard it before? It was a studied, artificial voice, harsh and grating, as artificial voices always are, but loud and ringing enough to have filled a cathedral.

He preached for half an hour. No wonder, poor man, that when the sermon was concluded, he sank back exhausted with the effort. It remains a mystery to this day from what part of that sickly frame that stentorian voice was drawn.

This was the one effort Mr. Green could make—two sermons a Sunday. He crept in and out of the schools, looked at the boys, and offered no remark. He attended any sick person, to whom I might direct him, but he made no acquaintances for himself. Perhaps in those long hours, that he spent in the arm-chair in the drawing-room, he composed the extempore addresses with which he benefited us on Sundays.

I saw I could not leave the parish of Mackworth to the care of Mr. Green. I signified to him at the end of the month, that I had made other arrangements. He quietly passed from among us, as he had arrived. We never learnt whence he came, nor whither he turned his steps. I do not remember that he made one remark during the whole of his stay with us. My daughters shudder still at the mention of his name; his presence was a wet blanket upon them, they say.

Before Mr. Green had left us, I received a message one morning from a neighbouring clergyman, that he had a friend who was looking out for a curacy. 'He is a first-rate man. I'll bring him over to Mackworth some morning.'

I expected him every morning for a week; but Mr. Howard and his friend never came.

At last, one morning I was feeling more unwell than usual, and was taking my ease in the study. Olive had just completed answers to three letters applying for my curacy,

when the front-door bell rang. The sound of the door-bell in the morning at Mackworth was unusual enough to excite some little stir in the house.

'Oh! papa, what an untidy room, and your necktie, oh! your necktie; no man worth having will work under a rector, who wears such a dress as that,' exclaimed Olive in a distressed voice, as she heard the sound of men's footsteps approaching.

'Mr. Howard and Mr. Grey,' announced the servant.

Mr. Howard was a man of the times; a good specimen of a class of clergy, which did not exist in my time. A muscular Christian, as good a cricketer as he is a parson, a man of considerable power and influence in his neighbourhood.

'I have brought my friend Mr. Grey to inquire about your curacy, if it is still vacant.'

'It is still vacant,' I replied; 'and most happy I shall be to find an eligible man to fill it.'

I looked at Mr. Grey; if the inner man equalled the outer man, he must be a treasure among curates. His dress bespoke him a man after Olive's own heart, his countenance bespoke him a man of piety and refinement. His face was cast on the mould of St. Augustine's, he had a rich musical voice, and bore that unfailing stamp of a well-bred man, in the happy choice of language he made use of.

'You have a fine old church here,' he said.

'Yes,' I replied; 'the interior requires some alterations, which we hope soon to accomplish. Pews and a high pulpit require to be removed.'

'Pews!' he said in a disappointed voice.

I was grieved; for though I saw the man was of the highest of the New School, I liked him, and resolved at once he should do as he liked—I felt I could become attached to that young man. It is so satisfactory too, working with a thorough gentleman.

'My friend has led me to expect,' said Mr. Grey in a courteous voice, which was but a cloke to a deter-

mined will, 'that if I accept your curacy, it will virtually be a sole charge, and that I shall be at liberty to carry out in all its fulness the Church's teaching. I have never held a curacy, where we have not had the privilege of daily Services.'

'Certainly,' I replied, 'my curate is at liberty to do anything he chooses in accordance with the teaching of the Prayer-book. But I fear you will never have a congregation beyond what this house affords.'

He smiled, rather condescendingly, I must confess; but I remembered Mr. Green, and thought I could outlive a little condescension from an earnest, zealous, young man, such as Mr. Grey.

We had some conversation about the population, books, and general matters; and then I said, 'I regretted I could not show Mr. Grey the church myself: this fresh attack of gout kept me a prisoner; but hoped Mr. Howard would do so, and let him see the house, which would be his eventually should we mutually agree.'

'I am certain,' said this winning young man, 'I shall like the place, and I have no doubt we shall be able to work together; you will approve, I think, of every plan I wish to carry out.'

'It is as good as settled, my dear,' I cried to Mrs. Hargreave, who entered the room shortly after. 'Mr. Grey has almost accepted the curacy. Olive! you need not post those letters. He seems a most pleasing young man; goes rather faster than you or I can follow, but sensible and earnest.'

In a short time the two gentlemen returned. They partook of luncheon; as they rose to leave I said, 'I hope I may consider it a settled thing—we shall see you at Mackworth ere long.'

'I can scarcely give a decided answer,' he replied. 'I must consult with my friends; you shall hear from me in the course of a day or two.'

I did not like that answer. I have always found, if a man has a pleasant thing to say to you, he says it straight out to your face; if it is

a disagreeable fact he has to communicate, he usually says, 'you shall hear from me in a few days.'

Mr. Howard lingered behind, and said, 'I hope he will come, he is such a good fellow, excellent clergyman, indefatigable in his work, but you see the sheep-pens and the three-decker have staggered him.'

'The what?' I exclaimed.

'The pews and the pulpit,' he said, laughing. 'Good-bye. I'll make him come if I can, for I know you will all like him.'

'Did I ever hear such a thing in all my life?' I exclaimed with a groan, as the door closed behind him.

'Well papa,' said Olive apologetically, 'we are accustomed to it; but you cannot think how unpleasant such a pulpit is to men accustomed to a low stone one.'

'What did that presumptuous young man call my stained oak pews, and my real mahogany pulpit? Did my ears deceive me?'

'What was it Mr. Howard said?' I inquired of Olive, who stood before me apparently enjoying my surprise.

'He said Mr. Grey was frightened at the sight of the sheep-pens and the three-decker,' she replied demurely; her cheeks expanded into a series of dimples, from the effort to control her ill-timed merriment.

I felt a strong temptation to throw the inkstand at my daughter, but I restrained myself. My thoughts reverted to the original restorers of Mackworth Church. Some seventy years ago the wife of the Squire of the place (for there had been for generations, Mackworths of Mackworth,) had from a Unitarian become a member of the Church. Her conversion had been late in life; as a memorial of her gratitude to God for having allowed her, although late in life, to find the Truth, she had devoted a large portion of her substance to the restoration of the church, which had received her baptismal vows; no expense had been spared. She was intensely grateful for the knowledge of the One Pearl of great price, which had come to her; she yearned to show her gratitude by her deeds.

I thought of the faith, the humility, and above all the love, which had prompted the erection of that south aisle, those galleries, those high pews, and the pulpit, which gave such offence to the taste of the present day. Did it lessen her good work in God's eyes, that ecclesiastical taste was depraved in those days, that architects had lost the high art of the Middle Ages? She gave her very best; would these young people do as much? And in the eyes of our great Architect would the beauty of the arches, the elegant tracery of the windows, or would the motive which had prompted the work, be of most value? In His eyes our grandest works are but as the first faint efforts of the infant are to the eyes of its mother.

I sighed deeply, for my anger had evaporated, and I was grieved.

'Papa dear' exclaimed Olive, 'does your foot hurt you? I fear you are in pain.'

Her merriment was gone, when she thought I suffered.

'I am not in pain, my dear, but I would like to be alone.'

Three days later came a note from Mr. Grey, stating that he much regretted being obliged to decline my curacy.

Olive at once posted the letters she had written the day we first saw Mr. Grey. Three of her letters brought no reply. Probably the advertisers had already heard of some engagement nearer London, which they preferred.

I trust my clerical brethren in the neighbourhood of London are not as perplexed as we northern clergy, when they seek for pastoral help. The favourite reply of every curate, whose advertisement I was tempted to answer, was, 'We prefer the neighbourhood of London.'

In reply to one of the four letters which my daughter had written, came a letter from a clergyman in Cornwall:—

'REV. SIR—From what you state in your esteemed letter of the 13th, it appears to me that the curacy of Mackworth is all I could desire. I perceive from your letter, that you

are a thorough gentleman; I am proud to inform you, that I am a gentleman born and bred; therefore, without doubt, our views and our desires will be one. I have been in Holy Orders some thirty years; I will enclose by the next post various high testimonials from clerical parties in Canada, with whom I have laboured successfully. I am desirous at once to enter upon a new field of labour, as I am residing in lodgings at present, and find them very expensive. Awaiting your next communication,

'I have the honour
to sign myself,
'Your obedient Servant,
'DECIMUS DRABBLE.'

'This is not promising,' I said, as I folded up the note which I had just received.

Olive took it from my hand. "Esteemed letter" savours of a counting-house; "gentleman bred and born"—people do not usually announce that fact regarding themselves; there are such various opinions on that subject: perhaps he is a gentleman in adversity—"lodgings expensive" reads like it; money cannot be plentiful. You see he has high testimonials. Then again, "clerical parties" has a curious sound; and there is something very formal in the "I have the honour to sign myself"—and such thorough gentlemen are not in the habit usually of signing themselves to each other "your obedient servant."

Such was my daughter's running comment on the letter before her.

'It is no use answering that letter; that man will never do,' I said: and so the subject dropped.

Mr. Green was gone; my health was so indifferent, that the mere thought of my Sunday's duty depending upon me sufficed to make me ill; and added to these reasons, we were obliged to spend a week in Lancashire with my brother-in-law, John Butler, to arrange some family business. I certainly was not favourably impressed with this Mr. Drabble's letter; I could not make out what he was, from such a letter as that—certainly not a curate after Olive's own heart. However, after

three days' indecision, having had replies to none of my other letters, I wrote to Mr. Drabble stating that I should be happy to see him at Mackworth, if he could come at once.

Upon that, my wife and I, with three of my daughters, went to Bonnington, the Butlers' place, leaving Olive and Clare to receive the new curate.

Olive was always ready with her pen. I desired her to write and tell me her first impressions of this Mr. Drabble. Some men never learn the art of letter-writing, who are, nevertheless, excellent fellows when you know them, and that may be the case with Mr. Drabble.

After I had been at Bonnington three days, I received a paper, headed,

'THE NEW CURATE,

'Genus *homo*; variety unknown before.

'The Rev. Decimus Drabble stands before me. Stature six feet two. His head, not fashioned after the shape of most men's, is flat and elongated, giving cause to surmise that his mother belonged to the flat-headed tribe of North American Indians, who, to ensure for their children what they deem the greatest beauty in man, bandage their heads, to lengthen the crown into the shape of a pinnacle. His complexion is of a copper hue, which confirms this idea.

'The thick black hair, with which nature has endowed the Rev. Decimus Drabble, is closely shaven round the pointed crown of his head, like some friar of old; the remainder of his hair hangs down into his neck, shading his voluminous neckerchief. Small, piercing black eyes enliven a huge elongated face, the lower part of which is concealed by grizzly hair.

'To describe the figure with which nature has endowed Mr. Drabble would be impossible, art has done so much.

'Exaggerated stick-up collars are supported by at least three yards of corded muslinette, laid in heavy folds around his long neck, and reposing finally on his contracted chest.

'Although the burning rays of a July sun shine upon us, yet, at a moderate guess, four coats envelope the upper part of the person of the Rev. Decimus, whilst his unfortunate lower limbs are scarcely provided with sufficient covering to conceal their natural outline.

'Two nights ago,' Olive continued in her letter, 'Clare and I were preparing for a late tea, when the dining-room door was thrown open by the servant, and the Rev. Decimus Drabble was announced.

'We had not expected him until ten o'clock; but we at once hastened to bid him welcome, and invited him to join our tea-table.

"These young ladies," he replied, as if he were addressing some invisible third person, "do me too much honour; but I cannot break bread in this house until I have seen the master, the Rev. Henry Hargreave."

"My father," said Clare, in a gentle voice, "regretted that he should be absent when you arrived; but he desired us, his daughters, to bid you welcome, and to make you comfortable until his return, which will be in the course of a few days."

"What do I hear!" exclaimed the Rev. Decimus, and his ungainly figure receded some steps towards the door. "Have I traversed the greater part of England, to find myself at the conclusion of my journey placed in so indiscreet a position? It is unseemly. It may be prejudicial to my clerical promotion, to be left alone in a house with two strange young females of attractive appearance!"

'I was suddenly seized with a violent attack of coughing; I feared I should be obliged to leave the room.

'Clare looked perplexed.

"I am so sorry my father is from home; but it could not be avoided. I hope you will take some tea; you must be tired after such a long journey."

"Decimus is hungry," said our strange companion, still addressing some invisible person; "Decimus had better eat salt in the house of this man. Young women," he said,

turning towards us, "I will join your meal; you have the happiness to be thrown into this familiar, this unusual intercourse with a gentleman born and bred!" He said this with a lofty wave of the hand; and at once seated himself at table, and did credit to the viands placed before him.

"We found some difficulty in keeping up a conversation with our strange guest; he appeared unable to forget what he considered the indiscreet position in which he was placed, in being left to the society of two attractive young females, as he had termed us.

"When we retired to bed, Clare insisted on locking her door, being convinced, she said, that our new visitor was a lunatic. I had no such fears; I looked upon him as a fresh study in human nature. The following morning, the Rev. Decimus Drabble sent to request that he might breakfast in his own room; to which request we gladly acceded. We saw nothing of him until luncheon: he bowed formally upon entering the room, and said, "Young women, I wish you a good morning."

"There had been a silence of some minutes at luncheon, which began to feel oppressive, so I ventured to remark—

"Mr. Drabble, have you ever played croquet?"

"Young woman!" he replied, in a voice with which I can conceive Blue Beard addressed his wife No. 6; "does my appearance lead you to conjecture that I dissipate the precious hours of my existence in so frivolous an employment?"

"I cannot say he looked as if a photograph of him, with a mallet in his hand, would have been an acquisition to the public.

"I am sorry you do not approve of croquet," I timidly replied.

"Croquet has its use," said the Rev. Decimus; "it serves to give exercise to the minds and bodies of the young females of this nation, until they are called to more serious duties. I look upon it as a frivolous occupation, suitable to frivolous minds."

He rose from the luncheon-table,

although our meal was not completed, and said—

"I intend acquainting myself with my pastoral duties; I absent myself purposely. Your father will be gratified to know that I have kept myself aloof from the society of the young women of his household, as much as was possible."

"We dine at half-past six," said Clare.

"The Rev. Decimus Drabble propelled himself to the door; for his gait cannot be called walking. When he puts himself in motion, his legs jerk out in one direction, his arms in another; his head shakes from side to side, and his figure looks as if it were only prevented from falling to pieces by the tight coats and necktie with which it is supported.

"As the door closed I burst into a fit of laughter, which I felt unable to control. In about two minutes the door reopened, and he said, "Young woman, in much laughter there is great folly; silence is a woman's crown of glory."

"It is a crown of glory, dear papa, your Olive is never likely to win. I do not think he imagined that he had been the cause of my merriment. Clara and I also went out, but we were careful to avoid our new curate, as he seemed so much to dread our society; we went to the house of the doctor, and begged him and his wife to spend every evening with us until your return.

"You will understand from this description, that you have indeed drawn a treasure to Mackworth, and the sooner you return to enjoy his society, the wiser it will be."

"The man must be mad," I exclaimed in consternation to my wife, upon reading Olive's letter; "was ever man so unlucky as I am?"

"It was a hasty thing in you writing to Mr. Drabble to come at once, without waiting for his testimonials, or making any inquiries respecting him; his first letter was peculiar."

I felt I had been precipitate, but own it does not answer in married life to say, 'I was wrong,' too often, so I made no answer to my wife. We thought it wise to return to Mackworth at once.

Olive's description of my new curate was not an exaggeration. I confessed in the solitude of my room to myself, that I was a fool to have made no further inquiries; but an Ethiopian cannot change his skin, and I was born with a temperament so sanguine, that whilst it has led me into many difficulties which a more cautious nature would have escaped, has always been a wonderful assistance in helping me out of them again.

I resolved before parting with Mr. Drabble, to find some one with whom I really could work, even if it were necessary to go up to London for the purpose.

We had no cause to complain that Mr. Drabble gave us too much of his society; he preferred the solitude of his own room, except at meal times, even after my return.

He appeared so satisfied with Mackworth, and so confident that I properly appreciated the advantage of having in my parish a gentleman born and bred, that it gave me pain to think that I must rid myself of him as soon as I could. His grotesque appearance, and pompous manner were so anti-devotional, that I had no option. If he had been an Adonis, uniting in his person the attractions of youth, wit, and beauty, he could not have felt more alarm about being entrapped by the wiles of the fair sex.

'Depend upon it,' said my wife, 'he has a story attached to his life. He would not feel the fear and dread of women's society, which he does, unless he had suffered through them.'

He remained with us a month, during which time I was making inquiries everywhere for a successor to him.

He was constant in his attendance at the schools. They were his chief interest. His remarks on some of my parishioners, old friends of mine, led me to think that his visits were not very acceptable. My people and I had known each other above thirty years. We were not one of your young England energetic, enterprising parishes, containing both much zeal and many sins. Far be it from me to say, that I

have not under my charge many humble, pious souls; but we were not full of zeal, and coats and flannel, wine for the sick, and soups. Squire, parson, church and respectability, were all mingled together. Our schools were the most modern things about us. My daughters took much interest in them; but when they found that Mr. Drabble made them his daily resort, they refrained from going there.

The young schoolmistress was a prime favourite, 'quite a treasure,' they said. She was a pretty blue-eyed girl with a quiet modest manner. They were woman-like, engaged in watching a little romance. Mr. Ward, our Sunday-school teacher and organist, a bright clever lad, was trying to make Miss Ford become his especial 'treasure;' her family was a little above his family in social position, so Miss Ford appeared to take considerable wooing.

'Rev. sir,' said Mr. Drabble one evening, 'it is my opinion, that your organist is a presumptuous young man.'

'Oh! do you think so?' exclaimed Olive; 'we are all so fond of Mr. Ward!'

'Young woman,' replied Mr. Drabble, 'members of your sex are competent to judge of the outward appearance of mankind, but are quite incapable of reading their characters.'

He looked, as if he thought he had silenced Olive, and continued—

'I have cause to complain of that young man. I am not going to say anything which could,' he said, turning to Mrs. Hargreave, 'distress the delicate minds of the young females here present. Oh! no; a gentleman born and bred could not do that: but I do wish to aver, that Mr. Ward is not becoming in manner towards Miss Ford.'

'Indeed!' said my wife.

'Yes, Madam! during the hours of the Sunday school I have perceived his eyes travelling from what ought to interest him—the heads of those youths, to whom knowledge has to be imparted—towards Miss Ford; some gawgaw about her attracts him; she sits sideways

from him, so I am happy for the example of the school to say, that she does not notice him. On Sunday, walking from the school to the church, that forward young man joined Miss Ford; I have always considered it objectionable to see a young man and a young woman conversing together. I consider Miss Ford a well-behaved young woman in her position,' he said, with what Olive declared was a severe look addressed to her; 'so I went up to protect her from that young man's impertinence. He had offered to carry some of her books for her, and was addressing light conversation to her. I anticipated that when I condescended to address the schoolmistress, this young man would at once fall behind; but no such thing; you will scarcely credit it he ignored my presence, and continued his foolish remarks. I felt myself compelled to reprove him.

"Young man," I said, "I perceive you have not been accustomed to much intercourse with your superiors, with gentlemen born and bred."

"Indeed, sir," he replied; "I do not understand you."

"Young man, you set a pernicious example to the youth of the place, by parading your attentions to this young person; when I join her with a view to screen her from public remark, you so forget yourself, that you continue to walk by my side uninvited. Is that the respect due to a gentleman in my position, or becoming conduct from an inferior to a superior?"

"Did you indeed, Mr. Drabble, say all that to young Ward? and how did he take it?"

"He left Miss Ford, muttering as he went, 'I was not aware that I was in the society of my superiors.'"

"I think you rather overdid it," I suggested. "I see no harm in the young people walking to church together."

"I should think not," chimed in my youngest daughter.

"I herewith," continued my curate, "make a formal complaint against Mr. Ward, and request you will publicly reprove him."

When I was alone with Mr. Drabble, I told him I thought he had been hasty; he would make ill feeling in the parish; and above all things, I do love to live at peace with my neighbours.

"Sir!" said Mr. Drabble with an injured air, "can a gentleman born and bred, though he may be a man of peace, suffer his honour to be insulted?"

"No, no, of course not, my dear Mr. Drabble," I said soothingly. "I would only suggest, it is as well not to have feelings and honour so near the surface, that they are constantly receiving rubs."

Mr. Drabble was offended with me, and the following morning young Ward also lodged a complaint against the insolent interference of my curate in his department. They had words in my presence, during which it was my impression that Mr. Drabble did not show himself the gentleman born and bred he was so anxious to assure us that he was.

Mr. Drabble inveighed against Ward, and begged me to give him his dismissal.

"The appointment does not rest with me," I replied; "your complaint must come before the churchwardens, and I recommend you to say no more about it."

"Sir!" exclaimed the indignant Mr. Drabble, "you do not support my office; if Mr. Ward does not cease to be organist, I must cease to be curate at Mackworth."

I hailed the announcement with delight; for days I had been seeking a pretext for telling him he would not suit me.

"I am afraid, Mr. Drabble, there is no chance of young Ward being dismissed from his office; the parish is quite satisfied with him, and I cannot think you will be supported in any complaint you make regarding him."

"Sir," said the angry curate, "you wish me to have Mackworth; a gentleman born and bred never goes from his word."

I only replied, "I think highly of Mr. Ward."

"Our engagement will cease after next Sunday," said Mr. Drabble.

'If you wish it,' I answered.

There was a few minutes' silence; I took up the newspaper; my companion began to talk, as if he were addressing that invisible friend of his.

'Decimus, you are a fool. Decimus! why do you leave this goodly place? Can you never rest? For ever, move—move—move,—you are an old man now, and oh! Decimus, it has been a hard and stony road to you, and will be to the end.'

My strange companion rose, and left the room.

'Is he the Wandering Jew?' I whispered to myself; 'poor fellow! I wish he were out of the house.' I avoided ever being alone with the Rev. Decimus for fear of what he might say to me or to his invisible friend in my presence, until the morning upon which he was to leave us. I was sorry for the old man, who seemed homeless, houseless, and friendless. I gave him a cheque for treble the amount I owed him, and invented a pretext to leave the room to escape his thanks. We were all sitting in the drawing-room, when he entered to take leave of us, dressed in the same peculiar manner in which he had arrived.

'Madam,' he said, going up to my wife, 'Fare you well. You are the fitting partner of the born and bred gentleman, whose name you bear. I return you thanks for your hospitality, may your charms and your virtues be repeated in each one of the youthful progeny which surrounds your board.'

'Sir,' he said, turning to me, 'I wish you prosperity. I regret that the unhappy fate, which has relentlessly pursued me since I first saw light, has driven me from this peaceful home. Sir, you may be a misguided father, but you are, and I am proud to say it, like myself, a gentleman born and bred. There are few such to be found. May we prosper.' He shook each of my daughters by the hand, turning towards me each time, and saying—

'With your permission?'

When he came to Olive, he held her hand, and said—

'Young woman! a woman should

live in subjection; you seek to rule in your father's house. My fate made you the instrument to cause my absence from this peaceful place. You influenced your father to support that insolent young man. Young woman! study to resemble your mother, and to become the pattern of homely virtues, which that excellent lady is; so may you some day grace a home of your own, by your virtues as well as by your attractions. I go. God bless you all.'

He was gone.

'Really, papa!' exclaimed Olive, who did not know whether to be angry or amused at his parting advice to her.

I rubbed my hands: 'Very good, Miss Olive, very good, lay that advice to heart. Have I not often told you, how I first saw my wife? I remember the day, as if it were yesterday.'

'She had a very different manner towards her father from what you have towards me, I can tell you. You make yourself the judge of my conduct; if any gentleman comes to see me on business, you never offer to leave the room; you stay, whether you are wanted or not, to see whether I act as my daughter would approve, no doubt. Now you shall hear how your mother acted towards her father the first time I met her.'

'Henry dear, we have often heard it before,' interrupted my wife.

'Have you? Still Olive shall hear it again to-day. I was inquiring after my first curacy, and it was a matter of importance to me to hear of one, for in those days, curacies were rare, and curates were plentiful, and curates behaved towards their rectors with proper deference: I expected I should learn something from my rector, and I believe in the present day every curate under thirty, who enters a parish, intends to teach his rector. When I reached Holmkirk, I was shown into a low morning room, a clergyman's study, the walls were lined with book-cases; even the doors and the window-shutters were painted in imitation of book-shelves; an old-fashioned armchair was wheeled into the fireplace, and in it bolt

upright sat your grandfather, a venerable-looking man with white hair. Olive may talk of the antiquity of the clerical dress she advocates; what would she have said to the dress of her grandfather? He always wore black shoes with gold buckles, black silk stockings, velvet knee-breeches and coat, snowy cambric frills round his wrist, and down his shirt front; his silvery grey hair was tied at the back of his head in a long queue, after a fashion, which had been in vogue in the days of his youth; a gold-headed cane lay by his side, his constant companion. The many years I knew him, I never saw his dress varied in the least; and I can assure his grand-daughter, he was a man who never failed to command respect. He was quite infirm, he had a table by his side, holding what he might require if he were alone; and near him sat a young lady. She was reading the Psalms for the day, when I entered; she laid down the book, and rose to make a profound curtsy.

"Shall I leave you, father?" she said.

"No, stay," he answered.

"I was not loth to see her stay, for if I entered the room, thinking of my curacy, I left it, thinking only of my rector's daughter.

'Women disfigure themselves so now, when I compare one of your dresses to her appearance that morning. She wore a white dress, which hung in scanty folds about her, not in the least concealing the natural grace of her figure. Her dress was short enough to show the beautiful foot and ankle she possessed—not one of her daughters has an ankle to be compared to hers. Her dress was fastened round her waist with wide blue ribbons. Instead of cushions, and frizzes, and nets, simple ringlets added softness to her face. I don't tell you about her being pretty, for Heaven gave her her face, but I tell you how simple and unstudied her dress was; how retiring and deferential were her manners to her father. She handed him what he required, but never once gave her opinion, or joined in our conversation; her

head was bent over a tambour frame, and I could scarcely answer the inquiries of the father, from admiration for the graceful figure of the daughter. I did not say, I can assure you, "If I become your curate, I must make such and such a condition. I think it right to do so and so." No, indeed, if I had done so, your grandfather would have answered, "You seem ambitious to be at the top of the tree, before you have begun to climb it. I am seeking a curate, I think you are in search of a mitre!"

'I was glad to take his curacy, and left the room, resolved that I would take his daughter from him also.'

'Which you did?'

'Before I had been his curate two years he gave me his daughter.'

'I do not stand rebuked,' said my incorrigible daughter; 'different circumstances require different modes of action. Perhaps mamma would not have been so demure had you been her father in the place of grandpapa. I know you well enough; you have told us this story only to divert your thoughts from the unfortunate Rev. Decimus. You were sorry for him.'

'Poor fellow!' I sighed.

'Poor fellow!' they all re-echoed. 'It seems wonderful how such a man ever found a bishop to ordain him, or ever found a congregation to listen to him above one Sunday,' said Olive; 'however you are at sea again. Advertisements are no good. What will you do now?'

'I am going to London,' I replied.

'Nonsense, Henry! Nonsense, papa!' were the exclamations of my six women-folk, 'you are not strong enough.'

'It must be done,' I answered. 'I will apply at clerical agencies, answer the "Guardian" advertisements, inquire at various clerical booksellers, and not return until I have seen and secured a curate, and brought him down in tow.'

'I wish you may succeed, for we want to go to the seaside,' replied my wife.

I went to London. It is impossible to describe how I toiled, when I got there. I think every clerical

agent in London must know that the Rev. Henry Hargreave wants a curate. No one would credit how many disappointments I had; the men I wished to secure would not come into the country, preferred town work; several objected to pews; some wanted to know, if I lived in a good neighbourhood. It was evident to me, that each man had the pick of about a hundred curacies, and Mackworth had a poor chance among them. I can only guess at two solutions of my perplexities. I once had a good, kind little curate at Mackworth; some black sheep in my flock abused him, and drove him by their scandalous stories from the place. He may, when he shook Mackworth dust from his shoes, have cursed the place, and wished it might never know the blessing of a curate again. I may be suffering from the ill effects of his curse.

Or, on the other hand, there is a Trades-union—a strike among curates, and whenever they meet with a rector who looks happy and at ease, and pleased with this world's goods, it is upon him they wreak their vengeance.

True, I am comfortable, and well to do; but I wish each one of my poorer brethren to be the same. I caught one at last. I looked upon him with suspicion, for I thought there must be something wrong about him if he came to Mackworth.

Mr. Dudley seemed a good Churchman, as far as I could judge, an earnest man, and a grave quiet gentleman. I was pleased, and I trusted that Mackworth would be equally pleased. But alas! my hopes were raised up—only to be again dashed to the ground.

Mr. Dudley could not be happy at Mackworth. The grave, silent manner, which had prepossessed me in his favour, proceeded from deep depression. Mr. Dudley was a man of about thirty years of age; he had had a curacy in Kent; he told me it was a sunny home, graced by the wife who had had his love from boyhood, and by two little ones. By one of those awful blows by which at times it pleases Providence to bring home to us the insecure

tenure by which we hold our treasures, he lost both his wife and his two children. On the Christmas morning they had been well, and shared his Christmas joy; before Christmas rejoicings were ended, his home was desolate. The mother and her two children lay side by side in the quiet churchyard, victims to the ravages of diphtheria.

A fellow-creature so stricken by the mysterious will of the Creator commands the respectful sympathy of all who behold him.

When I heard his sad history after he arrived at Mackworth, we all, my family, myself, and most of my parishioners, gave him our deepest commiseration. Two years had elapsed since this blight had fallen on his earthly joys; but time seemed only to increase rather than lessen the bitterness of his grief. He had been a useful man; I could discover that; his sermons were carefully studied, deep-thinking, well-chosen addresses. He could insist most forcibly on a resignation and a submission he found it impossible to practise. I found the secret of his superior sermons was, that they were a transcript of what he had been, not of what the man was now. They had been written and preached when his heart was glowing with thankfulness for blessings enjoyed, not when, as at present, his whole inner life seemed shrivelled by the blight that had fallen upon him. Mr. Dudley remained with us about three weeks. No efforts on our part seemed able to rouse him from his depression; hour by hour he would sit buried in his mournful reverie; if any one addressed him, he started, shook himself, and opened his eyes, as if he were recalling his senses from some other world, and the remark, however trivial, had to be repeated. His very food had to be placed before him; if his plate had not been filled, and slices of bread cut for him, I believe he never would have missed his daily nourishment. He dwelt in an invisible world with his departed wife, and was, I believe, quite unconscious of the objects that surrounded him. He visited amongst my people; I mentioned

to him some parishioners suffering from the same sad loss that he had experienced, hoping that their outspoken grief might bring balm to his heart, but I found it was not so, from the words of one young widow:—

‘Ay, but your reverence, he is a strange gentleman,—poor man, he’s nobbut besides himself with trouble,—clean daft. He comes into my home, looks round him and says, “Poor thing! it’s empty.” He a-most sets me off fretting; but says I, “Ay, sir, the Lord who gave us the Lord who’s taken back.” He gives me such a look, such a feeling look, and says, “God help you, my woman!” He stands there ever so long, but he never says another word; he wad na tak’ a seat for all my pressing. He slipped half a crown into my hand, and went away. Poor gentleman! God bless him!’

I heard much the same description of his parochial visits from other people. His grief seemed a kind of mania, and I felt, if I could in any way rouse him, the man might again become what I could see with a glance he had once been.

However, all this interest and sympathy for my new curate was no relaxation to me, and whilst I pitied him I pitied myself also. We could not leave home. How could I leave Mr. Dudley without any communication with his kind?

Sometimes I thought our happy fireside might jar on his desolation; he would be more comfortable if he were living alone, and knew at the same time he was welcome at all hours in the rectory. I was able to rent a small cottage; my wife furnished it from surplus furniture which we had at the rectory, and I gave Mr. Dudley the choice of residence.

‘Just as you like, sir,’ he replied in an absent manner.

‘No, Mr. Dudley, it is just as you like,’ I replied. ‘We are very glad to have you here, but perhaps in a house of your own you will be more at your ease. We will lend you our Hannah, a faithful old servant, who will take good care of you.’

‘Perhaps it will be better,’ he replied dejectedly. Once he asked me, ‘When do you wish me to go into this house?’

‘It will be ready on Wednesday next,’ I replied; ‘but I hope you understand, Mr. Dudley, we are only consulting your convenience. We like you so much at Mackworth, we wish to make you happy among us, if we possibly can.’

‘Thank you,’ he said mournfully. ‘I am not fit for parish work, I feel I am not.’

‘Life’s work must continue,’ I said, ‘although the heart seems breaking. In doing the work of your calling, the solace you need is most likely to come.’

He shook his head, and answered me by a groan, which grieved me sadly.

Hannah came to my wife with strange accounts of her master’s doings, after she had been with Mr. Dudley for the space of a week.

‘The first night, ma’am, oh! it were dreadful. He sat himself by the fire in the parlour, where I thought I had made all so comfortable and home-like; he looks all around, and is quiet for a minute or so, and then he shakes himself all over, and says, “Oh! I cannot, cannot bear it.” With that, he takes his hat, and rushes out of the house. I assure you, ma’am, he never returned until eight o’clock that night, nor asked for as much as a sup or a bite. He groaned so much in the night, that I thought I could not abear it, and must give up next day; but one gets used to most things, and I don’t take on about it now, when he groans and sighs, as I did at first.’

Whilst Hannah was confiding to her mistress her anxieties, Mr. Dudley came into my study, and told me he must beg for leave to close his engagement with me at once. He could not bear the solitude of Mackworth: it was quite insupportable; he felt himself unequal to all clerical duty; he wished to be with his friends, for sometimes a horrible feeling came over him, he felt as if his mind were giving way under the pressure of his grief, ‘for you know,’ he added, ‘there

never was sorrow like unto my sorrow.'

I could but own that it was wisest for the poor young man to be with his friends, and therefore I made no difficulties; but I was sorry to take leave of Mr. Dudley; I had attached myself to him, and had hoped that we might amongst us have diverted him from his grief. My family seconded my desire, and were constantly devising some little plan to beguile his unhappy hours. I had scarcely believed that my energetic Olive had in her character as much gentleness as she displayed in her endeavours to cheer Mr. Dudley. He left us, and as grief is not immortal, I trust his may be lessened as months succeed each other.

'What is to be done now?' was my inquiry the morning following Mr. Dudley's departure. 'How am I to set about finding a curate now?'

'What is to be done indeed?' answered my wife. 'I never knew such a thing in all my life. We shall never be able to go to the sea side this year. Really, Henry, you might as well resign the living at once.'

'That would not help us much out of our difficulty, my dear,' I replied. 'I think, Olive, you and I must set to work again with a good heart, and hope at last that we may be successful.'

So Olive and I did set to work again. We wrote letters, we answered advertisements; I had applications, but no success. All I desired was a curate. I offered 120*l.* yearly, a home in my rectory, or a furnished cottage, infinitely superior to the one in which I had spent my life as a curate. I had ceased to be exclusive as to views, and even Olive had abstained from edging in High Church requirements in the letters she wrote for me. One man travelled from Devonshire to see the place, a pleasant man upwards of sixty, an Irishman with Celtic faults and Celtic virtues. We mutually agreed, he took the cottage off my hands, and returned to Devonshire to fetch his wife.

'Next Saturday you shall see me,' were his parting words.

Saturday came, but with it came

no Mr. Gordon. Sunday morning brought no Mr. Gordon, but it brought a letter:—

'Rev. Sir,—I most deeply regret not being able to fulfil my engagement with you. I had better at once be candid. I have met with an unforeseen difficulty, one I did not anticipate when I was at your house. My wife objects to travelling so far north; her people belong to Devonshire, and I cannot prevail upon her to leave the county. I have used my utmost influence, but in vain; and as I cannot leave her, and she will not accompany me, I find myself placed in the distressing position of being compelled to break my appointment with you.

'With sincere regret and many apologies, I am, yours faithfully,

'EDMUND GORDON.'

I afterwards heard this man of sixty-five had married a pretty girl of sixteen, and she had turned quite unmanageable upon the hands of the poor fellow.

I was rapidly approaching despair, and my health was suffering from this state of uncertainty. True, all my neighbouring rectors who wanted curates, found much difficulty in supplying their need; but, one by one, each rector appeared at the rural-decanal meeting smiling and satisfied, with an appendage to be introduced, mocking my dilemma, who came time after time, alone and perplexed.

'My dear Hargreave, not found a curate yet? Mackworth must be uncommonly hard to please,' exclaimed one of these Job's comforters.

I overheard them saying to each other—

'Hargreave has not got suited yet; there must be something about the curacy which drives all the men away. We thought he was an easy fellow to get on with; depend upon it he has some crochets, which his common friends don't know, but which must be annoying to his curates.'

It was a cruel stroke of destiny, for me to overhear such remarks about myself, when I thought of what a set of men had fallen to my

lot since Mackworth had needed a curate!

I know I am easy tempered, and I know my rule in regard to my neighbours has always been, let every one please themselves, that we may be sure at least one person is pleased.

And now to find myself accused of mysterious crotchets and quirks, it is trying. Each heart knoweth its own bitterness. None can deny that Job was a sorely afflicted man, but Job never was tried by having to seek in vain for a curate, and in the search to lose credit, temper, and character. At last, my wife's sister writes from London.

'If poor dear Henry is still without a curate, since that interesting Mr. Dudley left him: (I must say, by the way, dear Mary, when you knew he had 500*l.* a year of his own, you played your cards badly, as the mother of six unmarried daughters, not to make one of them console him in his sorrow. You might have done it so easily :) however, if his place is not filled up, Charles Harcourt, the son of my dear friend, Lady Harcourt, wants a curacy. He is the sweetest young man in the world; he has too many virtues for me to be able to describe them to you; he is just a little too serious for my taste, rather bitten with new ideas, cares about going to church every day, and will not go to balls, or drive out in Lent. His dress, dear Mary, is perfection; his manners are charming, and Lady Harcourt tells me his poor people doat upon him. He is not strong, therefore he must leave London, where the dear creature is killing himself with hard work. Mackworth would be just the place for him.'

'What do you think of this?' inquired my wife, after she had read her sister's florid account aloud.

My six daughters exclaimed in one breath, 'One of Aunt Augusta's "sweet young men," and "dear creatures," would never suit you here, papa.'

'Beggars must not be choosers, my dear,' I replied; 'certainly it no longer becomes me to be fastidious. I have ceased to hope for anything superior, and shall be

delighted if your aunt's "sweet young man" will come and look at Mackworth. I shall write to him by return.'

Arthur Hopetoun Harcourt accepted the invitation conveyed in my letter, and came to us at once. He had been working with two other men in a large parish in the City; the hard work and the confinement had seriously injured his health. He seemed most unwilling to give up work in which he was so deeply interested, but the doctor's orders were imperative; his chest was weak, and country air was necessary for him.

'I trust my banishment is not for long; my mother is so anxious about me; and as I am an only son, I am bound to consider her.'

Augusta, this once, had not converted her geese into swans, as was her usual custom; Arthur Harcourt would pass a swan amongst his kind anywhere.

As I try to recal him, it is difficult for me to say in what his peculiar charm consisted. He was a tall, fine-looking man, and yet his personal appearance was of no value in comparison to the earnest, thoughtful expression of his face, of which every separate feature bore some characteristic stamp.

I was compelled to offer him a home at the rectory. The cottage which Mr. Dudley had occupied for a short time was considered too damp for a man with a weak chest; he agreed to remain with us until he could find some comfortable lodgings.

He had his two rooms at his disposal, where he spent part of each day; in the evenings we were glad to welcome him among us.

My new curate at once set himself to work in the parish, and did many things which I had felt ought to be done, although I had lacked health to do them. He proposed his alterations, and explained his wishes to me with a deference to my opinion, which I must confess I had not in the least anticipated.

I heard his praises sounded on all sides of my parish; some said, in village phraseology, they could sit under the new parson for ever;

others, that he was so kind and free-spoken; those who were in sorrow, said he was so feeling and so comforting; the young men termed him a regular brick; and those of my flock who frequented tea-parties and muffin-fights, agreed over the social cup, that he was a most interesting young clergyman, and very edifying in his discourses.

I was inclined to echo their opinion; he seemed to me to combine so much; he had only lived seven-and-twenty years, and yet he spoke well and thoughtfully on every subject. As a companion, he was most pleasant; he was bright and genial; his whole soul was occupied with the one work to which he considered himself vowed, and yet his earnestness had the rare charm of not being narrow-minded.

Before he had been with us two months, I said to my wife, 'I have waited to some purpose for a curate this time; I have indeed drawn a prize. It is a pleasure to have such a man as Mr. Harcourt about one!'

'He has only been here two months,' cautiously suggested my wife; 'we must not count upon his remaining too confidently.'

'Really, my dear,' I exclaimed with irritation, 'your caution is quite ridiculous. What is likely to prevent Mr. Harcourt from remaining? He has not married a wife, to prevent his fulfilling his engagement, nor has he lost one, to drive him out of his mind from grief; he is not likely, like poor Mr. Drabble, to take umbrage at every one he comes in contact with. No, my dear! Mr. Harcourt will remain with us, until he gets a living; for I do not think he will ever be strong enough to return to his London parish, and I must say, I hope it will be some time before he is presented to one; for it is a pleasure to have the society of so clever and excellent a young man.'

I feel as though I could describe the defects of a Mr. Drabble or Green with far more justice than I can the merits of a Mr. Harcourt. Their characters were composed of angles: in Mr. Drabble's case, sharp corners and peculiarities annoyed me hourly; with Mr. Harcourt, I

felt that each quality fitted into another, and the whole made a character progressing to perfection.

I may as well say here, that I did not follow my new curate in all his, to me, apparent novelties about ritual; although he assured me they were only ancient and wise customs revived. To him they were deep realities, means to an end; as such I respected them, and he found with Olive the sympathy on these subjects which I could not afford him.

Six months had sped, Mr. Harcourt was quite settled among us, and thoroughly appreciated. It was early spring, the east winds had set in with unusual severity; and although he would not see it himself, Mr. Harcourt's cough became more constant; he shrank visibly before this scourge of our climate. Lady Harcourt was spending the winter at Bournemouth; I proposed her son should spend three weeks with her before the additional Lent services commenced.

He left us. I suppose my heart is warm, although almost seventy years have heard it beat. I loved that young man, as much as I respected him,—I can scarcely write it. They wrote from Bournemouth, before he had been absent a fortnight, that he had broken a blood-vessel;—it was a matter of time, the doctors said. The time was very short, there was no power of rallying in him. He asked to see me. However infirm I might be, I would have travelled any distance to hold his hand once more. There was no place for sorrow in his sick room, although he was called away just as he was commencing his work with such manly zeal, in a field where workers are so much needed; and I, the old man, held his hand until it grew cold in my grasp. I draw a veil over the death-scene of a holy man; it lives for ever in my memory.

I am in London, and still Mackworth has no permanent curate. I certainly am not stronger than I was two years ago. I have emancipated myself from petticoat rule. I have been in town six weeks, and I

will not return home until I have a curate.

When I bade farewell to my family, and saw my wife and daughters start to pay an indefinite visit to Bonnington, Olive shed tears: she begged me to take her with me to London. How plentiful were her promises—no Enid or no Griselda should be more docile and meek than she would be. 'Do take me with you!' she implored. But I resisted. I have vowed a vow, Olive: it is, alone and unaided, to find for Mackworth a curate; when he is found, we will travel together, wherever you choose.' Another shower of tears I could not have resisted. I suppose I looked more resolute than I felt, for she submitted. I believe this will be a great step towards my emancipation from her authority; but in truth, my Olive is more gentle than she was this day year.

And now, British Public! you know my trials, must I command your sympathy or your censure?

Have I not suffered through Mr. Green, Mr. Grey, Mr. Drabble, Mr. Dudley, Mr. Gordon, and lastly through my valued friend Arthur Hopetoun Harcourt? To have known him was a gain, which out-balances the sorrow of losing him. I have resolved to leave Mackworth, on the ground of ill health, so there is still required a clergyman who will continue the work Mr. Harcourt had commenced. I promise a sole charge, no interference of any kind.

If any man, who reads this account of my troubles, thinks he could undertake Mackworth, I beg him at once to apply to my lodgings; for this anxiety of mind is ruining my health.

I must say, in conclusion, Mackworth is not such a bad place. I have found it possible to spend upwards of thirty very happy years there, and may say I scarcely knew what trouble was, until I became a Rector in search of a Curate.



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From a Drawing by Clara Maria Fops, 1811.]

ANGELICA CATALANI

[See "London Opera Directors."



Wm. & Goring - 10, Ave. Maria, N.Y.C., 1851

ANGELINA CATALANI

From "L'Unità e la Libertà" 1851.

THE LONDON OPERA DIRECTORS:

A SERIES OF CURIOUS ANECDOTIC MEMOIRS OF THE PRINCIPAL MEN CONNECTED WITH THE DIRECTION OF THE OPERA;
THE INCIDENTS WHICH DISTINGUISHED THEIR MANAGEMENT;
WITH REMINISCENCES OF CELEBRATED COMPOSERS AND THE LEADING SINGERS WHO HAVE APPEARED BEFORE THE BRITISH PUBLIC.

By the Author of 'Queens of Song.'

CHAPTER VI.

MR. AYRTON, MANAGER OF THE OPERA:
HIS DIFFICULTIES AND PERPLEXITIES—
AMBROGETTI—QUARREL BETWEEN
WATERS AND THE COMMITTEE—JOHN
EBERS—QUARREL BETWEEN WATERS
AND CHAMBERS—DISRUPTION OF THE
OPERA—FLIGHT OF WATERS—A DIS-
MAL BLANK AT THE KING'S THEATRE—
JOHN EBERS, DIRECTOR OF THE OPERA
—DANGERS AND DIFFICULTIES—EBERS
IN SEARCH OF A BALLET—M^{lle}. NOBLET
—HOPES AND FEARS OF AN OPERA DI-
RECTOR—DANCES AND DIPLOMACY—
FANNY BIAS—THE SORROWS OF AN
OPERA DIRECTOR—MONEY DIFFICULTIES
—COUNT PETRACCHI—LOSSES AND PER-
PLEXITIES—AMBROGETTI, THE BARITONE
—MR. BENELLI, DIRECTOR—AN UNFOR-
TUNATE SPECULATION—FLIGHT OF BE-
NELLI—A MANAGER IN DIFFICULTIES—
VELLUTI: A LUDICROUS QUARREL—MORE
LOSSES—SINGERS AND DANCERS; CA-
PRICES AND EXTORTIONS—THE SEVENTH
AND CONCLUDING YEAR OF JOHN EBERS'
MANAGEMENT—MM. LAPORTE AND LAU-
RENT DIRECTORS. [1816—1827.]

THE managerial career of Mr. Waters was chequered by varied success and disappointment. He sometimes carried through a season satisfactorily, but more frequently he found himself harassed by difficulties, tormented by losses, and suffering from disheartening 'ill luck.'

Mr. Ayrton, a man of the highest probity and good faith, undertook the active management of the King's Theatre in 1816: his duties commencing with the season of 1817, which opened in January. Waters was still proprietor. Ayrton was enthusiastic, and entered on his work with an ardent desire to effect a perfect revolution in the affairs of the establishment. He engaged several vocalists of eminence—some of whom had never been previously heard in England—going to Paris to

obtain the best available talent. It was he who first discovered and brought to London Madame Pasta, then a young and half-trained singer, scarcely conscious of the magnificent powers which she possessed. He also engaged Mesdames Fodor, Cam-porese, and Vestris, three singers of the greatest popularity. The male singers were Crivelli, Naldi, An-grisani, Ambrogetti, and Braham.

Ayrton suffered daily from the caprices of the singers, *signore* and *signori*. The leading performers took the most unwarranted liberties with the works of the most admired composers, and rendered many of the finest operas ridiculous by their interpolations and excisions. They threw every imaginable obstacle in the way of Ayrton, who desired to give these beautiful works (especially those of Mozart) in their integrity. When the singers failed in bearing down his opinion by their arguments, they appealed to the Committee, from which they obtained an order to do exactly as they pleased. Ere long, Ayrton was obliged to relinquish his post from sheer inability to control the principal performers. He was too mild and sensitive to be able to sustain a warfare against the haughty and capricious despots of the Opera. So infamously was he treated on all sides, indeed, that he was absolutely compelled to bring an action to recover the remuneration due to him for his services as manager.

Madame Fodor was a graceful actress and a charming singer. Ambrogetti created a profound sensation in musical circles by his brilliant singing and original acting. Perhaps his acting was sometimes, from its very truth, too forcible. When he was performing the part

of a madman in Paer's 'Agnese,' he went, it was said, to Bedlam, and there studied the peculiarities of the maniacs, which he reproduced on the stage with such terrible fidelity that he horrified every one who witnessed the portrayal. He was a very handsome man, and could perform equally well in serious and comic opera. He was a remarkable example of an observation which at one time bore a paradoxical aspect, that those performers who seem the most vivacious in public are often the saddest in private life. Ambrogetti's humour on the stage was irresistible, and he preferred characters in which he could display this quality; but he was naturally one of the 'most wretched of men—a prey to the horrors of hypochondria.' Madame Vestris was an exceedingly popular singer. Crivelli was—or rather *had been*—an excellent tenor of the old school.

The season of 1817 was long remembered as a most brilliant one, and was certainly a satisfactory one, in a remunerative point of view, to Waters. The prosperity of the season was increased by the number of officers and foreigners drawn to England on the conclusion of the Peace.

After this, however, Waters' embarrassments became more serious every year. Either from want of skill in directing his troops, or from lack of sufficient encouragement, he grew more heavily involved every season. In 1818 the affairs of the Opera were hopelessly entangled. The arrangements of Waters were so unsatisfactory to the Committee and general subscribers that numerous meetings of the noblemen and gentlemen most interested in the subject took place, and the proprietor was censured. This irritated Waters, and he issued a pamphlet, laying the facts and correspondence before the public, appealing against the conduct of the Committee. This effort did him little service.

John Ebers, the bookseller and librarian of Bond Street, the chief part of whose business consisted in the disposal of the box-tickets for the Opera, advanced Waters various sums of money, which at length

attained an alarming figure. Ebers was deeply interested in the success of the Opera, and had assisted Taylor, to whom he had been introduced by a mutual friend. Taylor had been in the habit of constantly asking him for loans; the band, under Taylor's management, required payment every fourth or fifth night, 'and as regularly as these occasions succeeded each other,' says Mr. Ebers, 'so sure was I to see the face of the manager.' Ebers, however, liked Taylor, and was unable to resist his persuasive manner. Taylor was 'a fellow of infinite merriment,' and very pleasant when he chose—and it was impossible to refuse his requests, even if Ebers had not been, as he was, predisposed to aid him. On one occasion, when Catalani declined to sing unless a debt of about a thousand pounds due to her was liquidated, Ebers gave security for the amount, and was obliged to pay it to the uttermost farthing. 'But it was impossible to do anything effectually for Taylor,' continues Ebers. 'It seemed to delight him to involve himself, and, as much as it was possible, to perplex others. He quarrelled with everybody, ridiculed everybody, and hoaxed everybody.'

In 1820 Waters applied to Chambers for a further advance. Chambers refused him decidedly, when Waters, in his anger at the disappointment, used such intemperate, insulting language that Chambers could not forgive him, and somewhat meanly revenged himself by causing the property of the house to be seized under an execution at his suit.

Waters was totally unable to raise any funds to save himself in his shipwreck. So completely was the treasury exhausted that the payment of the orchestra was ten nights in arrear, and he was perfectly without means of meeting the just claims of the instrumentalists. These ill-used and long-suffering gentlemen refused to play for him any more, and the performances were brought to an unexpected termination on the 15th August, 1820. Those persons who went with the

intention of visiting the Opera were greatly surprised by a notice at the doors to the effect that, 'owing to sudden unforeseen circumstances,' there would be no opera that evening. Nine nights of the subscription were yet to run, so the public were naturally exceedingly displeased.

Waters, after this, did not make any further attempt to struggle against his adverse destiny, but fairly ran away to Calais, where he remained in safe obscurity all the rest of his life, rarely venturing beyond the boundaries of his sanctuary.

Every one was discontented at the abrupt close of the season, whereby they were deprived of the favourite and fashionable amusement of London. No one was daring enough to volunteer to undertake the guidance of the deserted Operahouse. Meetings were held and committees formed to determine on what could be done. The first plan proposed was for the purchase of the theatre by a number of noblemen and gentlemen who should share in the profits, while, to guard against an unlimited personal responsibility, an Act of Parliament should be obtained, incorporating the shareholders, and containing the necessary restrictions and regulations. This plan was received with much encouragement; but unfortunately it was found that the litigation in which the King's Theatre was plunged was an insurmountable impediment to effecting the purchase with advantage. The plan was therefore regretfully abandoned.

John Ebers especially viewed with dismal feelings the bleak aspect of the operatic horizon. On the unhappy termination of the late manager's reign, he not only lost the profits he had reasonably anticipated from the letting of the boxes, but he was obliged to relinquish the most distant hope of recovering those sums which he had advanced as the price of the boxes he had taken. He displayed so much interest in the welfare of the King's Theatre that at last it was suggested to him to undertake the management himself. It was urged that he had

acquired a considerable amount of theoretical experience—that he had capital to carry him through the enterprise—and that he would be amply supported. Ebers objected that he knew nothing of music, and that the example of Messrs. Taylor and Waters was quite sufficient to deter others from risking a similar fate. Anything he could say was, however, overruled by the subscribers, with the greater number of whom he was personally acquainted; and he finally allowed himself to be persuaded into accepting the trying position of Director of the Opera.

At a meeting of subscribers and proprietors of boxes, it was announced that Mr. Ebers was willing to undertake the theatre for one year, and to take upon himself the entire responsibility, the only condition being that the direction of the company should be undertaken by Mr. Ayrton, a gentleman in whom Ebers had the utmost confidence. To this stipulation Mr. Ayrton, for his part, cheerfully agreed. Five noblemen and gentlemen were induced to form a committee. Signor Benelli was general man of business, and conducted the engagements with the performers. He had been 'a kind of manager of the Opera at Bologna,' and subsequently regisseur of the Théâtre Italien at Paris. He was recommended to Ebers by the Earl of Fife; but the acquaintanceship led to some lamentable results to Ebers. Signor Scappa was engaged as composer, and (greatly against Ebers' inclination) Signor Stefano Vestris as poet.

On applying to Mr. Chambers, the mortgagee, and Mr. Mills, the authorized agent of Mr. Waters, for a lease of the theatre for the season of 1821, Ebers encountered his first difficulty. He found that engagements had been formed (at a large salary) with several singers. These engagements he was required to ratify, the season was already advanced, and this was another disadvantage. However, he did not hesitate to enter into these agreements, and Messrs. Birch and Chambers, and Mr. Mills, on behalf of Mr. Waters, contracted to execute a lease to Mr. Ebers of the theatrical

property and the wardrobe for the season, at the rent of 3,180*l.* 13*s.* With some little difficulty, he formed an excellent company. Among the singers were Mesdames Camporese, Vestris, and Ronzi de Begnis,—three lovely women and charming singers: Ambrogetti, Angrisani, Begrez, and Curioni. The principal dancers were Mdle. Noblet, Fanny Bias, Albert, and Coulon. It was with infinite difficulty that these dancers were obtained, for the French Government, which ruled the Opera, was very unwilling to part with them. Waters had repeatedly endeavoured to persuade French dancers to come over, but had failed in gaining their consent, together with that of the French Government; and this was alleged as one of the chief reasons of his non-success—that he never had dancers of any attraction. A treaty involving consequences of the highest importance to England and France could not have been conducted with more solemnity and circumlocution than the treaty for permission to be granted to the leading dancers of Parisian Opera (Noblet, Bias, and Albert) to perform for a limited period at the King's Theatre. M. Boisregard (second ballet-master at the King's Theatre), an ex-officer in the French army under the Bourbons, went to Paris armed with letters from the five noblemen who formed the committee of the King's Theatre. Then an official correspondence commenced between the English ambassador at Paris, and the Baron de la Ferté, the intendant of the royal theatres. The dancers required as much delicate management as their rulers. They made the most exorbitant demands, and because the terms they asked were not joyfully acceded to, they resolutely refused to leave Paris. Boisregard endeavoured to secure the famous Bigottini, but the French Government positively refused to allow her to go; and it was only after numerous diplomatic stratagems that Noblet and Albert were permitted to depart for England, under stringent conditions that they should return at the expiration of two months, when

they were to be replaced by Fanny Bias and Coulon. Some dancers of minor celebrity were allowed to accompany them. Deshayes, a dancer who possessed great influence, readily assisted in the conspiracy to obtain the services of the leading Terpsichorean performers, and was rewarded by a lucrative engagement at the King's Theatre as first ballet-master. The terms demanded by the principal dancers, and given by Mr. Ebers, were extravagantly high.

Mdle. Noblet created a perfect furore of admiration on her arrival in London. 'The incense offered to Noblet's vanity must have been overwhelming, had she been accessible to such influence,' says Mr. Ebers: 'she was run after, invited, worshipped; everybody thought and spoke of her. I considered myself not a little fortunate in engaging her, and obtaining her *congé*.' Among her most ardent admirers was the Earl of Fife, one of the Committee. He was overjoyed at her arrival, and hastened to welcome her; a carriage was sent by him for her accommodation during her stay here; and he lavished costly presents on her. Every Sunday he gave a select dinner-party at the Pulteney Hotel, where he resided, and to which he invited Noblet and the other leading dancers as honoured guests. The fascinating *dansense* was exquisitely formed; but her features, with the exception of her sparkling black eyes, were only passable. On the announcement of the first rehearsal, all the men of fashion eagerly applied for permission to attend, paying liberally for the privilege. Even ladies of the highest rank and fashion thronged to the theatre. To gratify the subscribers, a divertissement, calculated to display the respective talents of the dancers, was hastily arranged by Deshayes, the ballet-master.

Albert, who was an extraordinary favourite in Paris, did not create the enthusiasm he was accustomed to excite. One night, however, a gentleman (of some seventeen or eighteen stone) was so delighted with his elegance and buoyancy,

that he shouted in stentorian tones from the boxes, 'You are an admirable dancer!'

Not only did Mr. Ebers act liberally in engaging these dancers, and an excellent company of singers, but he spared no expense in improving the wardrobe and scenery, departments which had hitherto been sadly neglected. Some good performers engaged, everything had been considered as accomplished; and the same scenes, the same dresses, and the same decorations were employed until the public grew weary—nay, after that state of public opinion had been passed. In 1817, under Mr. Waters' management, when 'Penelope' was produced, the costumes were pretty correct with regard to the male performers; but the ladies, with a slight sprinkling *à la Grec*, were attired in almost the newest mode. The scenery was absurd, and excited much laughter. One room, in the palace of the King of Ithaca, was of Moorish architecture, in which the Mussulman crescent was glitteringly conspicuous; while another apartment was decorated in the most florid style of the Corinthian order. Mr. Ebers gave unlimited powers to Signor Zara for the scenery, and to Sestini for the dresses. Signor Zara was an excellent scene-painter. He was the favourite pupil of the celebrated Ciceri, who was so famous at the Académie. Zara had great difficulties to contend against in consequence of the inconvenient size of the stage, which was small. This difficulty, however, he skilfully surmounted. Ebers was particularly anxious that the scenery should be brilliant at the King's Theatre, because all the other theatres in London paid the most scrupulous attention to the scenic details of the pieces produced.

Before the theatre was reopened, it was entirely repainted. The dingy red, in which the audience part had heretofore been muffled, was abolished and replaced by a light-blue ground. One very important addition which Ebers made was greeted with universal approbation—that of a green-room, which the theatre had not hitherto pos-

sessed. It was at the earnest request of the subscribers that this expensive addition was made; some of the subscribers were so eager for it that they offered to organize a fund to defray half the necessary outlay—a proposition which the manager declined to accept.

The theatre opened on the 10th March. The opera selected by Mr. Ayrton was Rossini's 'La Gazza Ladra,' then new to the English public. The rehearsal of this piece took an entire month. On the evening previous to the opening night, a 'dress rehearsal' was given; visitors thronged to the theatre, and the house was as splendid as if it had been one of the fashionable performances. 'My mind was then fully and anxiously occupied with anticipations of the following evening,' says Ebers himself. 'Yet, when I looked around me, and saw the appearance of the theatre, once again filled as it then was, and reflected how short a space had elapsed since all here was confusion and disappointment, some feelings of exultation did occur to me.' When the time came for him to go to the theatre this first night, he was troubled with some misgivings. Had it been possible, he would then have drawn back. But it was too late. There was an overflowing house: not a seat was vacant. As the manager entered by the stage-door, he met an intimate friend, who advanced with a dismal face and ejaculations of pity. 'This ungrateful public!' he cried; 'the wretches!—why, my dear sir, they have not left you a seat in your own house!' Ebers, relieved by the termination of the proffered condolence, began to laugh; but assured his friend that he bore no ill-will to the public in consequence of their treatment.

The evening was a triumphant success. The opera afforded great delight: the ballet created perfect rapture. Everybody was pleased; and many of the audience personally offered Mr. Ebers their thanks. 'Praises were lavished on what had been done, and compliments were paid to the despatch with which all had been accomplished.'

The exhilarating result of the evening changed Ebers' despondency into the most joyous exultation and hope. Only one thing disquieted him—scarcely any of the boxes had been taken.

Fanny Bias, the most celebrated of Parisian dancers, arrived at the expiration of the congé granted to Noblet. An accident prevented Coulon from appearing until some days after the time announced for his début. Mdlle. Noblet was reclaimed by the French Académie; but the English were so unwilling to give up one of their greatest favourites, that another diplomatic correspondence was entered on, with the hope of obtaining a renewal of the permission which had been granted to her. This was very difficult to manage. The French sent over an ambassador extraordinary, and the affair threatened to resume its former portentous aspect; however, it was at length arranged that she should be allowed to remain in London until the expiration of the season. Not only was this favour conceded, but it was agreed that two first and two second dancers should be permitted annually to come to London from the Parisian Opera, the English management agreeing, on their side, not to bring over any dancer contrary to the wishes of the French Government.

Fanny Bias was a dancer of *demi-caractère*, famous for her 'little twinkling half-steps.' She was not beautiful, nor had she the exquisite figure of Noblet, but she was singularly captivating. Two years after this she died.

At the termination of the season, Ebers was overwhelmed with congratulations; seemingly everybody rejoiced in his success. 'Those who had advised me to undertake the concern,' he says, 'reminded me of the share they had had in procuring them this *bonne bouche*; and those who had dissuaded me, professed their pleasure in being proved mistaken judges.' The newspapers announced the close of the house 'after one of the most successful seasons ever known,' and, 'to judge by all that was said and written,' Mr. Ebers must have been regarded as a

rapidly rising man, who was on the high road to fortune.

Ebers declares, pathetically, that the simple truth was, he had lost above seven thousand pounds. He had voluntarily burdened himself with unusually heavy expenses—new decorations, alterations, additions, first-class performers, and a general expensive re-modelling of the entire establishment. The engagements for the ballet alone had cost ten thousand pounds; but Ebers had the satisfaction—if it was one—of giving the ballet unusual importance—an importance it had not enjoyed for years. The number of orders which he was obliged to give, and the extension of the free-list, seriously deducted from the apparent prosperity which crowded houses seemed to imply. About three hundred people were free of the theatre every night of performance.

He did not deny, however, that he was very liberally supported. On the occasion of one of the fêtes, to which he sometimes invited his friends and patrons, a rich baronet said to him, 'Ebers, you give us the best of French dancers and French cooks; we will give you in return the best of English support.' And this was not an idle promise.

It was suggested, at the close of the season, that he should buy the theatre, and that the purchase-money should be advanced by those who were inclined to support the opera, the payment of the advanced money to be secured by mortgage of the establishment. Various impediments prevented this scheme from being carried into effect.

The bitter experience, dearly bought by Mr. Ebers during his first season, did not deter him from venturing on another trial, though he confessed that he felt guilty of great rashness in so doing, and that he was actuated by the spirit of blind speculation which impels a losing gambler to madly persevere in hopes of retrieving his losses.

For some time Mr. Chambers, the mortgagee of the house, had been in treaty with Mr. Waters for the purchase of the entire interest held by the latter in the theatre, Waters

having at length agreed to give up such ownership as he held, Chambers became sole proprietor. Whereupon Mr. Chambers, to make the most advantageous use he could of his capital, demanded from Ebers the yearly rent of 10,000*l.*, on his offering to take the lease for two years. Ebers was startled at the enormous advance of the rent. Chambers acknowledged that the sum demanded was large; but pledged himself that Ebers should not sustain any loss in consequence of the payments to be made to him, and promised to reduce the rent if the speculation was not a successful one. As Mr. Chambers was known to be a man of integrity, and then of responsibility, Ebers felt assured that he would not refuse to redeem this promise. The payment of the rent was to free Ebers from all charges of taxes, insurance, and similar expenses. He did not, therefore, feel so hampered as he might otherwise have been.

Mr. Waters, hearing of the bargain which Mr. Chambers had made with the new lessee, deeply regretted having given up his proprietorship, although he had, by buying and selling the theatre, cleared no less than seventy-three thousand pounds. He immediately filed a bill in Chancery to rescind the sale made by him to Mr. Chambers — which suit lasted a great many years.

Having completed all arrangements with regard to the house, Ebers hastened to obtain an attractive company of singers, dancers, and instrumentalists. He went to Paris for the express purpose of concluding engagements with the dancers, as the French opera had agreed to allow him to have two or three of their graceful favourites. The Earl of Fife and Lord Lowther, who were interested in the progress of the King's Theatre, were already in Paris; and it was chiefly owing to their exertions that successful engagements were made with the dancers; for it was a difficult matter to overcome the objections of particular ministers. Mlle. Noble, Madames Anatole, Albert, Charles and Ronzi Vestris, and Paul, were

the leading dancers engaged. M. Anatole was engaged as ballet-master in lieu of Deshayes, who was recalled to France. The singers were Meedames Camporese, Ronzi de Begnis, Cinti, and Caradori: Curioni, De Begnis, Placchi, Ambrogetti, Angrisani, Begrez, and Zuchelli.

By the advice of Count St. Antonio (one of the committee) and of Madame Camporese, Ebers unluckily engaged from Milan the Chevalier Petracchi, as director. 'A man who, though well recommended,' Mr. Ebers says, 'was a mere cipher as successor to Mr. Ayrtton,'—who had been obliged to quit the theatre because he could not maintain his authority over the singers. Petracchi knew nothing about operatic affairs, and was in the habit of interfering with 'everything but the music.' Mr. Ebers learnt too late the character of his new director; he was unable to cancel the engagement, and was obliged to receive the unwelcome Italian, and to pay his salary.

The house was well attended during the season, though, perhaps, less patronized than it had been for some few seasons past; the masquerades occasionally given in the theatre produced something; but the expenses of the house were so enormous, owing in a great measure to the extravagant amount of rent, that they vastly exceeded the income. Consequently, Ebers again sustained a serious loss (9,000*l.*), and found it impossible to discharge the full amount of the rent with which he was burdened. Two-thirds were paid, and for the remainder, Chambers accepted Ebers' notes.

About this period, Ambrogetti left England, having realised sufficient to afford him a competency in his own country. He did not, however, abandon the stage for some time. Contradictory rumours were long afloat respecting his ultimate destiny. Different people declared they saw him, from time to time, but each placed him in an absurdly opposite situation. One domiciled the rattling singer of 'Finch' *han dal vino* amid the dumb fraternity

of La Trappe. This individual had seen and talked with him. The great baritone had made over his property to the monastery, the prior refusing to receive him until he had fulfilled this duty, after providing for his needy relatives. The contrast between the gay Don Giovanni, the spirited Count Almaviva, and the cold, gloomy associate of the grave-digging brotherhood, was too temptingly dramatic to be lost. Another personage 'deposed to having dined with him, and drunk a toast to the prosperity of England and the English. A third witness came forward, and with many details corroborative of the statement, insisted that Ambrogetti *had* entered the monastery.

In 1823, one of the most remarkable operas produced by Mr. Ebers was '*La Donna del Lago*.' The utmost care was bestowed on every detail of this opera; no trouble was spared in mounting it. The characters were dressed in the tartans of their various clans, according to the information obtained from Scotch authorities who were consulted. The heron's plume and gold chain of the Scottish King were lent to Ebers by a lady of distinguished rank.

Signor Garcia, who had not been heard in England since 1818, returned to the King's Theatre this season.

So general was the impression that the Opera was a lucrative and money-making business, that Ebers received several offers from persons desirous of dabbling in speculation. One of these offers he accepted. Mr. Benelli, who had for some time been anxious to become manager, proposed to take from Ebers the lease which he held; to take upon himself the existing engagements and responsibilities of the season then about to commence (1824), and to purchase the whole of Ebers' interest in the house, including scenery, wardrobe properties, and whatever else he possessed in the theatre. The price of this purchase was fixed at 10,000*l.* which was duly paid. Mr. Benelli had for many years been actively engaged in theatrical speculations, and the

business of theatrical agency, in transacting negotiations between managers and performers. He was familiar with the continental theatres, and with their local politics, and was very well acquainted with the various performers who would form his company, so he enjoyed an unusual advantage in bargaining with them. Not only did this give him confidence, but it had due weight with those by whom he was patronized—the Marquis of Hertford and the other noblemen and gentlemen who composed his committee,—and gave security for the payment of the rent.

Ebers was heartily glad of this arrangement, which promised to free him from the responsibilities of a speculation which not only proved a losing one, but the cause of perpetual anxiety. The money received from Benelli assisted in repairing his losses during the two previous years. Unfortunately, the payment of the 10,000*l.* purchase-money was the only part of the agreement which Benelli performed.

The season of 1824 was, therefore, under the management of Mr. Benelli, who undertook the responsibilities, though nominally Ebers continued the direction. Benelli had scarcely entered into the arrangement before he repented, and tried every means of withdrawing from it. Another Chancery suit commenced, and a new flood of litigation opened upon the Opera.

Among other preparations for the season, the house had been newly decorated. An excellent company had been engaged. Rossini and his wife (Colbran Rossini) were engaged. There was intense excitement in musical circles regarding the advent of the great *maestro*. When he arrived, the most fashionable houses gladly welcomed him as a guest. It was one of the conditions of his engagement that he should compose for the theatre a new opera. This he never did. Mesdames Ronzi de Bognis, Vestris, and Caradori, with Garcia and Remorini, were the chief singers. Madame Catalani appeared again during the season. Ten years had elapsed since she had been last

heard. She had no regular engagement, but performed for a certain number of nights. It was a matter of surprise that so long an interval had produced no greater change in this singer. But the grand sensation of the season was the appearance of Pasta. The excitement she created was something extraordinary—almost unprecedented.

The dancers were Ronzi Vestris, Le Gros, Idaline, Grenier, Noblet, and Julie Aumer. Notwithstanding the excellence of the arrangements for the ballet, the dancers did not produce that ecstasy of admiration and delight they had aroused in former seasons.

Although the audiences this season had been crowded, and the receipts swelled by the total suspension of the free-list, and the general refusal of orders, the loss to Benelli was such, that he quitted the country heavily in debt to his performers. He was very anxious to raise as much money as he could, and actually advertised for sale all the scenery, wardrobe, and properties of the house; but Ebers applied to the Chancellor for an injunction, which was granted, and the sale was stopped. The performances had not benefited by the number of superfluous engagements which had been entered into. Rossini broke his contract; his wife had scarcely appeared when she was obliged to withdraw in favour of Catalani, 'by whom the house had gained nothing.' The list of performers sounded well; but, from divers causes, the season was not a satisfactory one. 'Thus,' says Ebers, sadly, 'with a new management, new performers, and new attractions in every department, the enterprise of this year experienced the fate of all preceding ones.'

On Benelli's disappearance, Ebers was plunged in heavy difficulties. He was compelled to pay the performers, being responsible for the engagements. A perfect army of monetary troubles was arrayed in antagonistic force against him. To escape with the least injury, Ebers could devise no plan apparently more eligible than that of taking back the theatre, and endeavouring,

by cautious and diligent management, to retrieve some of the losses of the year. Unhappily, Chambers became bankrupt about this time (1825), and as he had accepted two notes from Ebers for large sums, the claims which the assignees made for payment came very unfortunately in conjunction with the claims of others. 'At this time,' says Ebers, 'I almost quailed.'

The history of the difficulties through which Mr. Ebers had to struggle before he could arrange to open his theatre is a tedious and painful one. But he did succeed in fighting his way, and was actually about to commence his season when, on the very morning of the first day, he was prohibited from holding any performance in the King's Theatre until the building had been surveyed by architects, and reported to be safe. In this new strait, Ebers was puzzled. However, he took the little theatre in the Haymarket, for the early part of the operatic season, and removed his company thither.

The news of these difficulties and perplexities afforded great source of merriment to Mr. Taylor. 'Ah, ah,' he would say to some mutual acquaintance, 'so Ebers is done up at last—thought what he'd do; they have pulled his house about his ears for some purpose!' Ebers bore him no enmity for these little playful sarcasms; especially as they were his last, for he died that year (1825).

The Opera was not well supported that season. The singers were Ronzi de Begnis, Vestris, Caradori: Garcia, Curioni, Begrex, Remorini. It was difficult to obtain singers. Those in Italy were engaged principally by Barbaja, and when Ebers was making his arrangements, the Carnival season was approaching, therefore nearly all the singers of eminence were engaged at the various theatres in Italy.

Velluti, a very famous singer of the time, was engaged. As he received a large salary (£3,000.), he undertook the duties of director of the music as well as those of leading male singer. M. Bochsa was director of the orchestra and cho-

rus, and composer of the music for the ballet. Velluti produced for his benefit Rossini's opera of 'Aureliano in Palmira,' which involved him in a legal quarrel of an unusual nature. He promised to pay the chorus-singers an additional remuneration beyond that of their regular engagement, on condition of their exerting themselves more than ordinarily. This promise, Velluti contended, was given only to the male singers. 'The ladies went to law, and having brought Velluti into the Sheriffs' Court, gained their cause, one of them officiating as advocate on the occasion.'

Madame Pasta, then at the height of her fame, was also engaged; she demanded, and obtained, very large terms. The most exaggerated rumours were circulated of the vast sums she received. In engaging dancers, Ebers was fortunate, though the ballet was by no means so successful as it had hitherto been under his management. Mr. Seguin, assisted by M. D'Egville (who was again ballet-master, with a salary of 1,300*l.*) spared no exertions in forming a superior ballet. Theodore and Mlle. Pauline were the chief dancers. The latter became a universal favourite; she was exceedingly pretty, with a light sylph-like figure, and light laughing eyes.

The season was peculiarly prosperous towards its close; but the heavy expenses incurred in bringing out 'Il Crociato'—which was produced in the most magnificent style, and really regardless of expense—prevented it being so profitable as it might otherwise have been. Ebers found himself again a loser to the extent of 6,150*l.* The expenses of the alterations at the King's Theatre cost between four and five thousand pounds. The rent of the other theatre during the progress of the repairs was 294*l.*; the high rent of the King's Theatre Ebers was obliged to continue paying as usual during the alterations.

After some deliberation, Ebers determined on again trying his fate in 1826, and he renewed his lease, which had expired. His expectation, as he admits, must have been sanguine to induce him to accept the

theatre at the terms insisted on by Mr. Chambers and the agents of that gentleman's creditors, the rent being increased from ten to fifteen thousand pounds. However, he took it at that rent for the season of 1826, and engaged Ronzi de Begnis, Vestris, Caradori, Garcia, Curioni, Begrez, Remorini, &c. Considerable efforts were made to secure Pasta, who, in the height of her fame, was performing in Paris. As Benelli, on leaving England, had left the greater part of her salary for the past season unpaid, the prima donna was naturally unwilling to accept another engagement at the King's Theatre, but said that she would sing for Ebers if he would pay the residue of Benelli's debt. Eventually, it was arranged that she was to come to London. When she appeared, there was an immediate difference perceptible in the receipts and in the aspect of the house. Ebers wished to engage Madame Catalani, but the terms proposed by her husband, De Vallebregue, were so ludicrously extortionate that he was unable to agree to them, and afterwards inserted the articles in his 'Reminiscences' as a veritable curiosity. The dancers were Charles and Ronzi Vestris, Coulon, Madame Leblond, and Julie Aumer. The direction was again confided to the tried hands of Mr. Ayrtton.

The alterations at the King's Theatre being completed, the company was transferred thither.

The expenditure this season exceeded the receipts by a larger sum than that of the preceding season. Unfortunately the successes which Ebers achieved were nullified by the weight of the ever-increasing rent, which rose on each renewal of the lease.

In 1827, Mr. Ebers went to Paris to obtain singers and dancers. He there became intimately acquainted with Rossini and Meyerbeer. His friendship with the former led to a proposition that Barbaja and he (Ebers) should join as partners in the management of the King's Theatre—Rossini to become director of the music and the performers, the engagements to be conducted by Barbaja; the arrangements for the

ballet, letting the boxes, and attending to the subscribers, to devolve on Ebers. Rossini evidenced some anxiety that this proposal should be carried into effect.

The chief singers (1827) were Madame Caradori: Zuchelli, Galli, Curioni, and De Begnis. There was a great effort made to obtain Madame Malibran, then a brilliant star in the operatic world, but Count Strossoldo, the Governor of Milan, refused to allow her to depart unless she was replaced by a prima donna of equal talent and reputation. She demanded 1,000*l.* for two months, which Ebers would gladly have given her. Ebers was also most desirous of engaging Mlle. Sonntag, but an already existing engagement precluded her from accepting his offers. An effort made to secure the services of Porto was not more successful. He required 1000*l.*, which was refused. A proposition was then made to him for half the season, by Rossini, at Ebers' request, but at this offer he became furious, and swore he would 'go to Verona or to the devil, sooner than accept an engagement for half a season.' He was not engaged. Every obstacle was thrown in the way when Ebers sought to obtain a first-rate male dancer. Paul demanded 1000*l.*, which Ebers considered an absolute extortion; and when Ebers' agents wished to engage Coulon, Dubois—the manager of the Académie, who was Paul's friend—prevented Coulon's *congé* from being granted. Mlle. Brocard tried to procure Coulon's *congé*, but the mere mention of his name 'put Dubois in such a violent rage, that she actually ran out of the room in fear of more serious consequences.' The ballet this season was very inferior. The difficulties which occurred in attempting the engagement of superior artists were almost insurmountable—so jealous was the Administration of Paris of the growth of the London Opera.

Indeed Ebers was not particularly fortunate this season with his engagements. Madame Vestris was engaged, but her prior engagement at Covent Garden would not permit

her to continue long at the King's Theatre.

Mr. Ebers was perhaps one of the most unlucky managers that ever essayed to rule at the Opera. The losses which he had sustained in the course of the six preceding seasons, together with various causes, had so embarrassed him, that the rent of the theatre was now in arrear, and the assignees of Chambers became impatient for the liquidation of their claim. In the beginning of the season, 1827, an arrangement was made between the parties, by which the assignees agreed to an extension of the time for the payment of the money due, on certain securities being given. About the month of June, however, the assignees considered it more advantageous for the estate of Chambers not to prolong their forbearance, and they accordingly put an agent into the receipt of the income of the theatre. Much negotiation passed between all the parties concerned, but the assignees persisted in the determination they had formed,—that Ebers' connection with the theatre should not be continued. It was their intention to take the establishment into their own hands for the benefit of the creditors; but circumstances rendered the execution of this design impracticable or ineligible.

In consequence of this resolution, Ebers was unable to obtain a renewal of the lease, and when the close of the season was approaching, his embarrassments caused the performances to be abruptly discontinued. As if fortune was resolved, at the last moment, to offer him some reparation for his sufferings, the season of 1827 was attended with the least loss of any that had passed under his management. The enormous rent alone hindered it from being profitable. He lost 2974*l.*

The managerial throne being vacant, propositions were advanced by Mr. Ayrton, by Signor de Begnis, and subsequently by MM. Laporte and Laurent, who secured the coveted sceptre. They commenced their rule with the season of 1828, at a rent of 8000*l.*

E. C. C.

'FAITHFUL AND TRUE.'

A Tale in Three Parts.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'GRASP YOUR NETTLE.'

PART II.

IT had been summer when Roger Lewin and Georgie Fenton brought their happiness to so sorrowful an ending by the imprudence of their love; it was winter now when Mrs. St. John and her young sister were sitting by the fire in the great drawing-room (where Georgie had been caught and had her ears boxed, for playing chess with the secretary), outwardly occupied about some woman's work, though inwardly absorbed in their own thoughts, pleasant with neither if ominously steadfast with both.

By Mrs. St. John's advice Mr. Hunter had of late, and since Roger's departure, refrained from any very open demonstrations, contenting himself with merely 'paying attention' to Miss Fenton—such as sending her the best of his hot-house flowers and greenhouse grapes; lending her pleasant books to read; insisting (he had a way of insisting very arbitrarily, if quietly, on a point; and a great disinclination to 'take no for an answer,' when he had set his heart on 'yes' instead) that she should ride his little half-Arab Leila, which he declared to her one day in a loud whisper, he had bought for her use alone—after which she would as soon have mounted a Royal Bengal tiger; making her presents of outlandish curiosities, of which, girl-like, she was very fond; and the like. All of which small amenities poor Georgie knew portended more; and the special thought now agitating the mind of each sister was—'I hope he will not be rash, I am afraid of her yet,' with the one; and, 'I wish he would say it out plainly at once, and then I should have done with him, for a time at least,' with the other.

But neither spoke. Indeed, there had been very little speaking of any kind between the two since Roger went away. There had been no

complaining from Georgie; no reproaches, no tears—at least, not in public; but she had silently withdrawn herself from her sister as from a declared enemy, and lived with her as with a stranger in the house. They sat and worked together in the morning—as is usual with the women of a family—while papa dictated letters and his essay on safe speculation to his new secretary in the library, and Mr. St. John, in the dining-room, read the 'Times' from 'hair to nails,'—from the first sheet of the Dead and Alive to the last of the sales' advertisements; and they drove out together sometimes, not often; and they dined at the same table; and sat together again in the evening with papa and St. John for additional companions; and there their intercourse ceased. For all real purposes of sisterhood they were as entirely severed as if in separate houses. A state of things, which be sure sister Carry made the most of, when indulging in confidential talk with the neighbourhood; so that little Georgie came to be known throughout Brough Bridge as the most deceitful little varlet in the place, 'very sweet and charming and all that, but leading that poor Mrs. St. John quite a dog's life, and treating her abominably.' The only persons who stood up for her with anything like thoroughness were Charley Dunn, and his great ally, Louisa Globb. All the Globbs indeed, spoke kindly of her, though they did think her a great many degrees too slow and wondered at her for not being more jolly. But these two were her especial champions, and never allowed an ill-natured word about her to pass unchecked.

Her trial had changed Georgie. From a mere child whose main characteristic was her crystalline simplicity, and who gave herself up to love and pleasure without a

question of to-morrow or how was it all to end? she had become a silent and reserved woman, with a charge to maintain and a treasure to defend; more sweet, perhaps, than when she was only a good-tempered girl who had never known a true sorrow, and whose amiability came more from the absence of trial than from the presence of patience; but so quiet and dispirited, so unlike the blithe, bright creature whose face had turned like a sunbeam on the graver party in the phaeton that happy summer day! It was all for the best though, she used to say to herself. Her present time of probation would steady her, and make her fitter to be Roger's wife than she would have been if nothing had happened; and perhaps after all—and this was a great thing for her to say—her sorrows were blessings in disguise as she had so often read, but as she had never believed before. So she waited and hoped and trusted and believed; and read the second column of the 'Times' advertisement sheet.

Of course she received no letters. Roger had written one; but getting no answer he knew what had become of it, and that it was quietly reposing in Mrs. St. John's desk; unless, indeed, she had made an end of it altogether, and burnt it. So he wrote no more, not wishing to afford sister Carry food for either wrath or amusement by his love. But instead of the post he subsidized the 'Times.' Every Monday morning, at the head of the second column, appeared these words; 'Faithful and True:' no more. Sometimes, not always in the very bad weather, on Wednesday or Thursday the same announcement came again, a little varied: then it was 'Faithful and True.' I also.' Mrs. St. John could intercept letters, but she could not touch this. She used to see the advertisement with the rest, and comment on it with the rest; laughing at the idea of people corresponding in such a manner, and declaring it to be a smuggler's trick: she had heard that all these queer announcements were smuggling messages; but she never

looked at Georgie when she spoke, not connecting her with the matter in hand. And if she had, the quiet face bending tranquilly over her work would have told her nothing. It was a secret known only to two people in the world, if suspected by a third—Charley Dunn, the 'rattle' of Brough Bridge. And he, happening to know that Roger Lewin had for crest a mailed hand and arm coupé at the elbow, with the motto 'Faithful and True' beneath, and being of the nature, as he phrased it, to put two and two together when he wanted to make four, came to the conclusion, not too rashly, that 'little Georgie was carrying on that game was she, sly little puss in boots!' and, 'who'd have ever thought it! but *mibi beat!* how love does shapen folks' wits to be sure!—fancy sharpening up little Georgie Fenton's to corresponding by the "Times!" My word!' said Charley to himself, thinking it all over, a little doubtfully, 'if that vixen of a sister Carry only knew!'

It had been snowing for forty-eight hours, and the country was almost impassable. A few of the hardier gentlemen in duck shooting boots and rough pilot coats went like feathered millers from house to house, carrying ladies' gossip and dealing out scraps of local news, acceptable in a country place always, but doubly acceptable on days when every one else was confined to four walls and home faces learnt by heart years ago. Not always by heart though; but by eyesight and brain, which is more monotonous. And among the rest there came to the Hall where the Fentons lived, Charley Dunn escorting Miss Louisa Globb; and soon after them, Mr. Samuel Harmer Hunter, bent on his second grand proposal. He would try his fortune this once again, he thought, and if she was still obdurate he would do—he didn't quite know what; cut his throat, or blow out his brains, or leave Brough Bridge for ever, or, more probably, go home and be very miserable, and drink an extra glass of whisky toddy to make himself sleepy, and so insure a good night's rest. He was rather

annoyed when he saw the obstructive visitors there before him; but he trusted to his friend Mrs. St. John, and determined to wait the issue of the day's events: a day destined to be of supreme importance to more than one.

Months of futile watching had lulled Mrs. St. John's fears. Daily she had inspected the post-bag; but, save that first letter written the day after Roger's departure, nothing had come: and though she still asserted her right of looking first into the bag, and apportioning the letters to each, yet she did this rather as a small bit of magisterial authority than as a precaution. To-day, however, the post was late, so that the time had gone by; her mind was occupied with Mr. Hunter; and the postman blew his horn so gently, or its sound was so muffled in the fast-falling snow, that she did not hear him; and, in fact, did not think about him at all. But Georgie, impelled by some strange impulse—she could never understand what—left the room when she heard the hall-door open, and, receiving the bag from the footman, unlocked it, and looked at the letters. For a moment she turned deadly pale, and the ground seemed to reel under her; but she had strength and presence of mind enough to thrust one letter, addressed to herself, unseen into the pocket of her dress, before giving back the bag to the servant to take to Mrs. St. John. Then she ran up stairs, scarcely breathing, and not living so much as feeling Paradise about her; and when she was fairly in her own room, she locked the door and bolted it too, and sinking into her chair broke the seal of her first love-letter—the all but actual presence of the one she loved and who loved her!

How long she remained there, wrapped in delicious dreams, she did not know; but all this time Mr. Hunter was on fire, and Mrs. St. John on thorns, while Charley Dunn and Louisa Globb looked and wondered, and one at least was in the dark, if the other was half illuminated—a good guess often proving a serviceable lantern when

nothing more confessed is at hand. At last sister Carry could bear it no longer. With a flushed face and one of her unmistakable glances, she rang the bell—a little too violently for perfect good breeding—bidding the footman tell Flounce, the maid, to go look for Miss Fenton; 'and remind her,' said Mrs. St. John, with sarcastic spite, 'that visitors are in the drawing-room.' Words spoken with all her fiery temper up and alive, to Charley Dunn's distress lest his favourite should feel annoyed; though Mr. Hunter, being a man of authority, thought she showed a becoming spirit, and knew when to tighten the reins to perfection.

But Georgie was too well fortified to feel annoyed at anything. The worst she felt was a kind of sighing trouble at being torn away from Roger; but knowing that she could meet him again in the same way, and at the same place, this very evening and for countless days after, she came down on the summons full of pretty blushes and apologies for her rudeness.

'I think I must have been asleep!' she said laughing, and opening her eyes wide at the tell-tale timepiece; 'I had no idea I had been away so long.'

'Oh! you need not be asleep to be stupid,' snapped sister Carry in a fume. 'You are not asleep all the days of your life, and I am sure you are never anything but stupid! Just like you, going sitting upstairs without a fire on a cold winter's day like this!'

'Come and warm yourself, Miss Fenton,' said Mr. Hunter, making way for her to pass between him and the fire.

'I am not cold, thank you,' answered Georgie, not perhaps quite so graciously as she might have spoken. But then one does not like to be called stupid in company; and it is but human nature to vent one's displeasure on the unoffending. Which was what Georgie did when she passed Mr. Hunter, a little disdainfully, and coaxed herself into a chair next to Charley and Miss Louisa, partly because it was the farthest possible from the iron mer-



GEORGE'S FIRST COAST GUARD

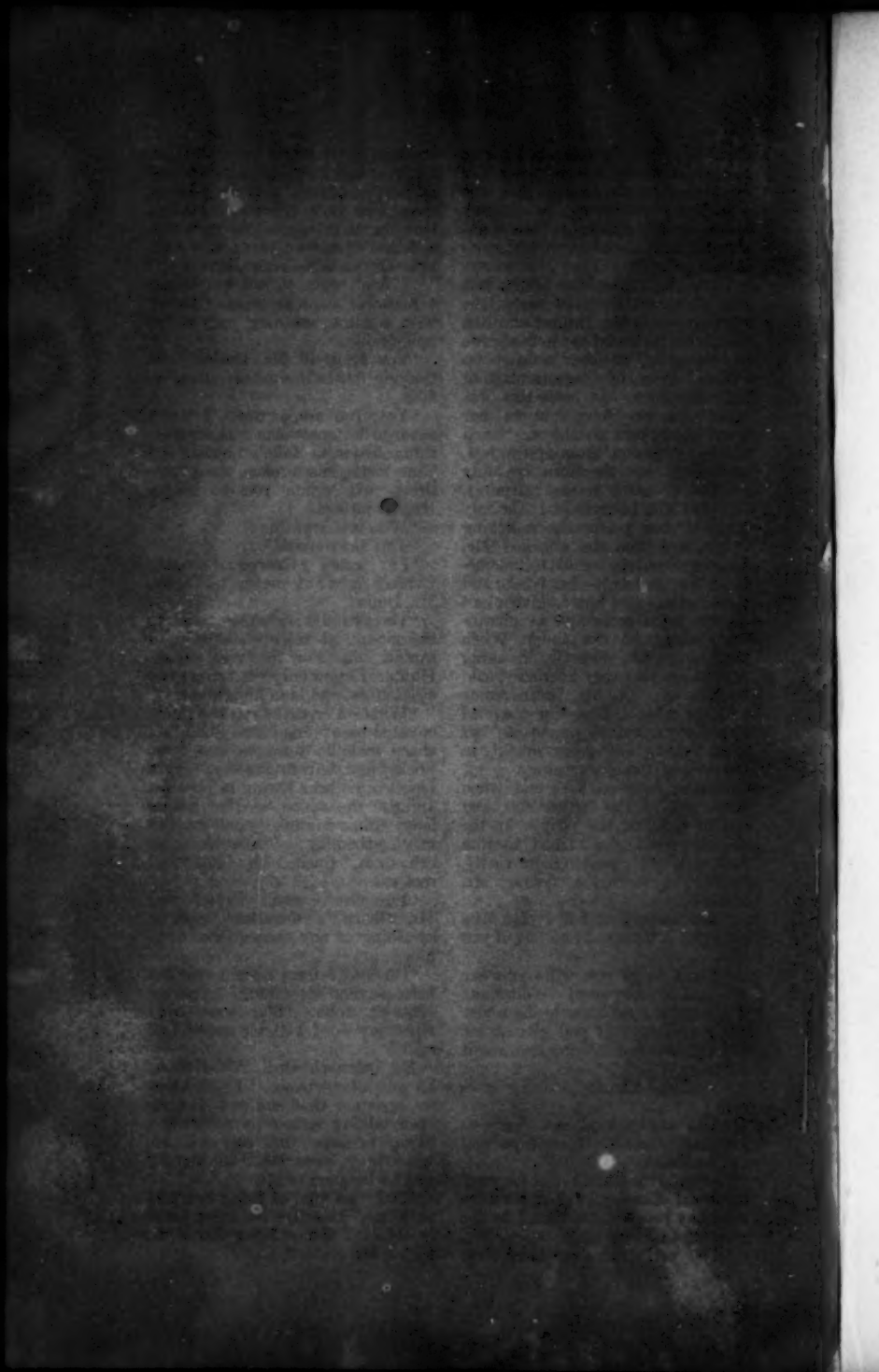
(See "Faded and Faint")



Drawn by M. Ellen Edwards.

GEORGIE'S FIRST LOVE-LETTER.

(See "Faithful and True.")



chant and Mrs. St. John, and partly because a thought had struck her on entering the room, and she wanted to 'make up' to Charley Dunn. Dear innocent little girl! she was so transparent in her cajoleries.

In a short time Miss Louisa left her place, and clattered across the room to where Mr. Hunter sat. She wore what it pleased her to designate as 'clumpers,' and they made a noise like a company of dragoons striding over the floor. At least this was what Mrs. St. John said in her peevishness, because she was vexed at the 'intrusion' from first to last, and could not therefore see any manner of good in the intruders. Not that Miss Louisa cared; she only laughed her peculiarly rollicking laugh, and then she attacked Mr. Hunter, whom she wanted to do something for 'society'—that is, she and all her set wanted him to give a ball on the same scale and as charmingly managed as the pic-nic. When she had gone, Georgie, speaking rather low and very hurriedly, said to Charley, 'Oh, Mr. Dunn! come and see what a beautiful tasselled fern Lady Scratchley gave me last week,' rising, and going quickly to the door of the conservatory.

Charley followed her; and when they were at the farther end, and out of sight of the people in the drawing-room, she turned to him and said, still speaking hurriedly, 'Will you do me a favour, Mr. Dunn?'

'You know I will if I can, Miss Georgie; a thousand and one, if you like.'

'Yes, I know you will; you are so good to every one! Well then, if a letter should come to me under cover to you, will you give it me quietly, and not tell any one about it?'

'Yes,' said Charley, looking innocent.

'You are so kind, and I am so grateful!' said little Georgie, putting out her hand.

'I would do a great deal for you,' answered Charley. 'I don't care for many people more than I do for you, Miss Georgie.'

'You will have done more than

any one in the world has ever done for me, and I do so like your not asking questions.' And Georgie gave him such a smile! Had it been for anything else than receiving a letter from her lover, it would have almost upset poor Charley.

'I don't want to ask questions; I know all about it,' cried Charley with a burst, meaning only to be honourable.

'You know all, Mr. Dunn?' and Georgie felt as if she was going to faint.

'Yes; you are, or were—I won't swear to the tense—engaged, or something like it, to Roger Lewin; and your sister, has broken up everything, and wants you to marry Hunter instead.'

'Who told you this?'

'You did yourself.'

'I?' cried Georgie, aghast; 'when? how? I never told you, Mr. Dunn!'

'Yes you did; when we went to the pic-nic at Harrowfield side; I saw it all. For the rest, about Hunter, I know only what every one else knows, and is talking about.'

'What on earth are you two doing closeted here!' cried Mrs. St. John's sharp metallic voice, as she came briskly into the conservatory. 'What has Georgie been saying to you, Mr. Dunn?' she added, as that young lady, rather confusedly and without much thought of shoulders or crinolines, pushed by her and escaped.

'I'm sure I don't know,' was Mr. Charley's ungallant answer. 'Nothing of any consequence, anyhow.'

'Oh, stuff! I am certain she has been saying something,' persisted Mrs. St. John. 'She is so odd! Upon my word I think she is half mad!'

Mr. Dunn whistled. 'Well then,' he said after a pause, 'if you know so certainly that she and I have been talking secrets or concocting plots, perhaps you can tell me what they have been all about;' and he laughed noisily.

'Oh! that kind of thing won't do with me,' said Mrs. St. John, petulantly. 'I thought you knew me better, Mr. Dunn!'

'But how the deuce can I make something out of nothing?' exclaimed Charley; 'if you know so much you ought to know more; and if you are so very sure that things are going on, you ought to know what things they are, for I'm sure I don't!'

'Don't be rude, Mr. Dunn,' retorted Mrs. St. John angrily. 'I will find it all out, you may be sure of that! for I can see there is something underhand between you and Georgie, and I'll not bear it, so I tell you.'

'Come, come! no quarrelling between friends,' cried Charley. 'That will never do! never pay the old woman her ninepence, as my old friend used to say;' and he took her saucily by the waist, in his character of the chartered libertine, and made her laugh, because, as she said, 'he was so funny.' Then, afraid to remain longer, lest she should find a hook somehow whereon to fasten the quarrel for which she was ripe, Charley made a sign to Miss Louisa Globb, and they both went away into the wind and snow, smoking cigars 'like a house a-fire,' said Mr. Charley Dunn. But he was not alone in this amusement; for cigar-smoking was one of the Miss Globbs' peculiarities, which, though not decidedly sinful, yet stood midway between vice and crime in the Brough Bridge estimate of morals.

Mr. Hunter had come to the hall meaning to stay to dinner. Things had come to a crisis in his heart, and the sooner the mountain of suspense was smoothed down, to the level of certainty, the better. He never seriously contemplated that this level might land him in the uncomfortable swamp of rejection. He was too proud for that—had too high a top to his head, as he used to say, and held his own material advantages too dearly.

The retired iron merchant was by no means a sentimentalist, and had no very romantic ideas of love-making. With him it was a business pretty much the same as other businesses, to be got through best when undertaken most methodically, and with least fuss or disguise. He

had no notion of hiding away in corners with the girl he wished to make his wife, and there essaying his arts of persuasion unassisted; his wooing, like his iron trade, must be done in the face of day, and with the world and the family for witness. In accordance with which system, he opened his brief so soon as the dinner was at an end and the servants had withdrawn; and there, once again, before father, sister, and brother-in-law, asked Georgie Fenton solemnly, 'if she would make an honest man who loved her, happy, and consent to be his wife?'

Imagine a girl of twenty receiving an offer of marriage in a well-lighted dining-room, over the wine and walnuts, and in presence of all her family elders! It would have been painful and embarrassing at any time, and under any circumstance of either indifference or love—but to-day!—the pain and embarrassment were as nothing compared to the disgust. With Hyperion Roger in her heart, poor Mr. Hunter was nothing better than a satyr, and a very ugly one, to Georgie Fenton.

'You say you will not, and you really mean it?' he asked as much in astonishment as sadness, when Georgie had stammered out her refusal; for he never could understand why she, whose fortune would be a mere song when her father died—as he had good reason to know—could not see her interests more clearly, and accept what was undeniably the best marriage in the country. 'What is there against me, Miss Fenton? Tell me frankly; why do you dislike me so much?'

'There is nothing against you, and I do not dislike you,' said Georgie in a low voice. 'But finding fault and marrying are two separate things; and though I do not dislike you as a friend, yet I may not wish to marry you, all the same.'

'You might do worse, child,' put in the father, to whom Mr. Hunter mutely appealed.

'Absurd! ridiculous! giving yourself such airs!' cried Mrs. St. John. 'What can you be dreaming of, you silly girl, to refuse so good an offer, and so kind a man?'

'Do as your sister says,' said Mr. St. John, peeling an orange. He always played chorus to his wife's monologues, and found that a pleasanter office than being in opposition. Which he had once tried but never repeated.

'You ask what is impossible,' said Georgie, looking up and speaking more boldly than was usual with her, a little desperately too, as if at bay. 'Can any of you advise me to marry a man I do not love, because he is kindhearted and has money? Is that *marriage*?' with a scornful emphasis on the word.

'Why, what else is it?' exclaimed Mr. Hunter, pushing his grizzled sandy hair straight off his forehead, and looking bewildered.

'There is something behind all this,' cried Mrs. St. John, very wrathfully; 'you would not be so excessively refined and particular and all that, if you had no other feeling!'

'And if I have?' said Georgie, with her face all a-flame.

'Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself, Miss!' sneered Mrs. St. John.

'Why more ashamed of myself than you were of yourself, when you married Mr. St. John, and said that you loved him?' retorted Georgie.

'If you are going to be impudent, I shall leave the room,' said sister Carry, in a rage.

'Mrs. St. John! now don't, pray! Mrs. St. John!' exclaimed Mr. Hunter, annoyed at the turn things had taken, and quite understanding that little Georgie was not the kind of person to be driven save by himself. 'Leave Miss Fenton time for reflection, and I am sure she will see her duty better; and do as I and all her friends desire. She must see that it is her duty: she only wants time.'

'No! no! Mr. Hunter!' cried Georgie. 'I have had time! This is not the first time you have—done me this honour,' she added, fetching herself up with some difficulty after a pause: it is so hard to be polite when one is disgusted! 'and indeed, Mr. Hunter, if you have any real kindness for me it will be the last.

It is very, very distressing to me: of course it is!' she said; and then breaking down entirely, and with no farther hope of manful fight in her she went over to where her father sat, and, kneeling down by him, laid her head on his knees, and took refuge in the womanly sanctuary of tears. 'Papa!' she sobbed, 'do not let them tease me so! Take my part, papa, and do not let them make me so unhappy.'

'I think she must have her own way, Hunter,' said vacillating old papa, smoothing her hair. 'You are not the man to want a forced wife.' (He was though: he wanted the fulfilment of his will as much as of his love, and only objected to driving when he did not hold the whip, and when he saw the little creature was 'turning down all manner of streets' where she had no business to go, by the clumsy goadings of others.) 'Let the question rest for the present. She is very young,' apologetically; 'and though you know that I would like it better than anything that could be proposed, still, if she don't take it in that light you had better leave her alone.'

'Thank you, dearest, best papa!' cried Georgie, taking his hands and kissing them; 'you are my own dear, dear papa, and I love you so much!'

'How can you be so weak, papa!' cried Mrs. St. John, dashing up from her seat and nearly upsetting a decanter; 'you know what all this encourages; and yet you condescend to act as advocate to a penniless adventurer by giving way to her fancies like this! Do you want her to marry a beggar—a mere nobody, after all? Do you want her to marry Roger Lewin? I dare say she will say yes, and thank you fast enough then!'

'My dear,' said papa, very angrily, 'wash your linen at home; you need not publish your sister's indiscretions!'

But the 'great word' had been launched, and Mr. Hunter knew now the reason of his otherwise inexplicable fate. The whole scene of the dog-cart and the picnic flashed across him, and he wondered at his

past blindness. Like most masters over many men, Mr. Hunter had a profound contempt for all underlings. It was not the personal contempt of the aristocrat looking down from the vantage ground of pedigree on the muddier multitude below, but the contempt of the successful man who had made himself, and who knew no reason why all men should not make themselves as he had done. It was the doctrine of self-help run into aggressiveness, success rampant over worth. Indeed, there was no worth in his eyes where there was not success, and the want of money was with him synonymous with the want of both gifts and virtues. 'No man who is poor can be worth his salt either intellectually or morally,' he used to say; 'and those who fail never deserve to succeed.' It is to be presumed that he did not rank failure in love as of the number of a man's deservings.

With these principles, then, it can easily be understood what he felt when he heard that he had a rival, and a successful one—for so he argued from Mrs. St. John's manner—in a mere copying clerk; (he laughed at the title of secretary as a silly euphuism established for pride); a young fellow not making a hundred a year, under the orders of a testy old fool like Mr. Fenton; a mere upper servant in the house, not higher than the governess or the tutor, and scarcely above the favourite lady's-maid or the confidential man. A copying clerk to be preferred to him, Samuel Harmer Hunter, owning the largest property and the longest purse for twenty miles round! The only thing that could have made him really angry with Georgie Fenton, or that could have induced him to withdraw his suit, was the knowledge of the disgrace with which she had voluntarily covered herself, and the degradation which she had wilfully chosen. She might as well have professed an attachment for the groom as for a young man living on the unassisted work of his own hands, and making a hundred a year for income, not more.

'It is a most unfortunate dis-

covery,' he said, and he could not have looked more solemn whatever he had discovered, 'and if you please, Mrs. St. John, we will say no more about it. No talking can make it better, and too much will be sure to make it worse. I am sorry, Miss Georgie, very sorry; I had hoped better things of you: but let all that pass now; dreams must come to an end some time; the sooner the better, perhaps.'

'See what your wicked folly has done!' cried sister Carry, almost crying with anger, 'lost us the best friend we have ever had!'

'Ah! that's true! I did not think of that,' said papa uneasily, taking his hand off Georgie's hair, and glancing up at Mr. Hunter. But he, balancing his dessert knife over his finger, mechanically adjusting the pivot, neither heard nor saw it was only later in the evening that the recollection dawned on him that Mr. Fenton owed him a large sum of money, and that the St. Johns, too, had managed to negotiate a pretty little loan on their own account. And as he thought of this, his face grew dark and his heart hardened.

'You have one comfort to take to bed with you,' said Mrs. St. John, as they parted for the night, 'you have ruined your father and me, and made yourself a beggar.'

'I am very sorry,' said Georgie, gently, 'but I cannot sell myself to put things straight. I will work for papa and myself, and do all I can honestly; but I cannot marry a man I do not care for because papa owes him money; nor,' said little Georgie, lifting up her eyes and speaking steadily in spite of her sister's angry glances, 'do I think it right to fail a man I do love, and who loves and trusts to me.'

Saying which she vanished into her own corridor, and Mrs. St. John was left to digest this bitter pill of her young sister's independence and confession as she best could.

'Don't tell me, St. John,' she said to that much enduring man, when the confidence of night was between them; 'she corresponds with him somehow. Don't I know what girls are made of? not one in

a thousand has the strength or courage to trust what they don't see, and certainly not one in a thousand would believe a man constant unless he told them so half a dozen times a week, and a man ever so far away too! Don't tell me indeed! That young scoundrel writes to her somehow.'

'Perhaps so, Carry,' said Mr. St. John, meekly, 'you ought to know best.'

'I should think so!' said Carry, snorting. 'But what shall we do, St. John, if Mr. Hunter takes against us, as he most likely will? We are all in his power, you know; papa, and you and I—what shall we do? He is a dangerous enemy, that I can tell you!'

'We must do the best we can, Carry.'

'The best we can! that is just like you, St. John! always some stupid commonplace that helps no one! Of course we must do the best we can, no one doubts that, but what is the best, you stupid fellow?'

'We must wait and see, my dear.'

'But I won't wait and see!' cried irascible Mrs. St. John, who wanted everything settled now before midnight.

'I am afraid you will be obliged, my dear,' said Mr. St. John, sleepily: then turning on his side he grumbled out, 'Oh! bother, Carry! don't worry any longer, and do for heaven's sake go to sleep and hold your tongue,' goaded by irresistible drowsiness to this most unusual act of self-assertion.

'What a brute you are, St. John!' muttered his wife; 'you deserve to be ruined. But St. John was snoring, and her anger might have been left unsaid.

'What can you be going out for!' cried Mrs. St. John, the next day, when little Georgie, in hat and coat and uncompromising balmorals, prepared to set out into the snow with as much zeal and courage as Miss Louisa Globb herself.

'I have been in the house so long,' returned Georgie evasively; 'and I am going to the village.'

'Why?'

'For a walk,' replied Georgie steadily.

'Stuff! you have some other reason, I know,' said her sister in her highest key.

'You had better find out what it is, then,' answered Georgie walking out of the room, and out of the house almost at the same moment.

'She has gone to post a letter!' said Mrs. St. John, aloud. And for once she was right; suspicion flooding the mind at times with a wonderful amount of clairvoyance. 'But I will take care that she has none in return. How the little minx can have learnt his address I do not know: there has been no letter for her—that I can swear to!'

And then she stopped, and she thought of yesterday, and her sister's long absence, and then—had her strange conference with Charley Dunn any meaning in it?—any occult connection with this disgraceful matter? The more she pondered the more she suspected, and the more she floundered, seeing but dimly.

She watched the postbag vigilantly after this, on the time-honoured principle of the steed and the stable-door; and felt more than ever sure that something was going on, unknown to her, by the very quietness and serenity of her sister. She never thought of 'Faithful and True,' in the 'Times'; or noticed that Monday was always a specially bright day with Georgie, or that on Tuesday or Wednesday—unless, indeed, the weather was too bad for even gentlemen in duck-shooting boots, or the Miss Globbs—she invariably walked to the village, where she posted a certain letter with her own hands. This last fact, indeed, she could not have known by any method short of bribing Mrs. Twoshoes the postmistress, who was not to be bribed; though she might have judged of all the rest. Her uneasiness was at its height when Charley Dunn called, a few days after the famous Hunterian mishap; and he and Georgie again retreated to the conservatory, where Mrs. St. John found them a few minutes afterwards, Georgie very red and Charley suspiciously nonchalant,

pretending—she could see it was nothing but pretence—to be examining the ferns again; as if they cared so much for ferns, they must go in and look at them every three or four days!

Oh, Mrs. St. John! if you could have looked through the screen of plants and stands, as you came pattering so quickly and yet not quickly enough, across the drawing-room, you would have seen Mr. Dunn slip into your sister's hand a letter written in the ex-secretary's broad and clear handwriting; you would have seen her rapid action of gratitude and Charley's brightened face; and you would have understood far more than you do now, when you find them merely pottering about the flowers, as you say, standing at quite a respectable distance from each other, and talking of nothing in heaven or earth worth even your sharp ears to catch!

'I am sure that something is going on!' said Mrs. St. John, again: and again she resolved to watch and see.

But love, who laughs at locksmiths, laughs much more at sisters: and when the wit of Brough Bridge took his departure, there was no power in all the house to prevent little Georgie's rushing into her own room, locking the door, and, half blinded by tears and excitement, reading again and again this second letter from her lover—this second, and the last: for on the following day Roger was to sail for China, as he had told Georgie in the first; and which, indeed, was his reason for writing at all, braving the fate of Mrs. St. John's hands and eyes, in his anxiety that his darling should have as little cause for sorrow as might be.

'And now,' he said, 'not even "Faithful and True" could reach her; and they must both live on faith alone: he in a land of barbarians, and she among the temptations to distrust and forgetfulness of home. It would be only for a few years; and then he would return, sufficiently wealthy to claim her hand even from her father, and able to keep her as she should be kept when he

had got her. She was to believe in him, as he believed in her; and if she wavered for any cause, save her own deliberate desire, she was to think of him as living only in and through her love; and that, if this was withdrawn, he should die, having nothing more to live for. But he did not think she would change, for he believed in her as in himself.'

It was an earnest, fervid, loving letter, and fed poor Georgie's soul with joy, even while it filled it with anguish at the greater gulf of separation which it opened. And yet, she thought, if it should be really only the beginning of the end!—if this exile to China was the best and quickest way of ending their suspense;—if in a few years' time—'and years fly fast,' said little Georgie with her lips, following the accustomed formula, though in her heart she felt that they lagged with frightful slowness, laden as they were with love and hope deferred—he should return, and be as he said, able to make her his wife!—well, then this present sorrow would be all forgotten, and they would come to their happiness, none the less lovingly blessed for having suffered. In which mood, half resigned and half despairing, but resolute in her love and faith, Georgie Fenton buried her face in the pillows, and cried as if her heart was breaking.

After that day she neither read the second column in the 'Times' nor went to Brough Bridge, on Tuesday or Wednesday either.

Mr. Hunter was not a man of any refinement or real generosity. He was too arbitrary, too selfish, and with too little regard for the feelings of others; he thought too much of money, and had too high an opinion of himself; he was too material, and too rudely 'common-sensical,' as he used to call himself, to be refined. What he cared for most in life was to have his own way; and when he could not have that, he had no very great interest in anything. It had been his will that he should make Georgie Fenton his wife. Hitherto she had refused him, certainly, but with so much gentleness and sweetness that

he might easily flatter himself as to the reading of the future, and believe that she could be 'brought round.' Not knowing of any rival, and alive to his own eligibility, he could not choose but hold on and hope; but now;—while he thought, his face grew very dark, and his heart hardened and hardened till it seemed as if it would harden itself into stone outright.

'They shall pay for it!' then said Mr. Hunter, rising from his stiff high-backed chair and walking about the room. 'They shall learn what it is to insult money and to brave power!' This he said with his hand on his writing-table, in the left-hand drawer of which was Mr. Fenton's acknowledgment for ten thousand pounds, lent by Mr. Samuel Harmer Hunter, docketed with an I O U signed by Stephen St. John, and bearing in the body of it these words, 'Five thousand pounds.' Fifteen thousand pounds had his wooing of little Georgie cost him; and the result had been—an upper-servant, not worth a hundred a year, preferred before him!

'They shall pay for it!' again said Mr. Hunter, seating himself at the table, and writing to his lawyer. 'Good-natured as I have always been to them, they shall learn that I am not to be insulted with impunity, and that if they have thought to make a cat-spaw of me, they have been grievously mistaken.'

They had thought nothing of the kind; and Mr. Hunter knew they had not: but when men are angry they are invariably unjust: and Mr. Samuel Harmer Hunter was angry. Wherefore, he wrote his letter to Mr. Pike, his lawyer, and told him that he must recover these two debts, and be quick about it; and that, for certain private reasons not necessary to go into, he was not disposed to show favour or even leniency. A fiery, red-hot epistle, not like his usual calm and well-judging instructions; which made Mr. Pike purse up his mouth and whistle softly to himself, seeing deep into the millstone. But this was the first time that Mr. Hunter had been smitten beneath his armour,

and for once passion triumphed over calculation. When he had written his letter, he felt happier; for now that the war had begun, it did him good to feel that he had carried reprisals into the enemy's very camp, and had burnt their homesteads about their ears.

The family had foreseen nothing of all this. They had felt it an unpleasant mischance that Georgie should have refused so good an offer, and they had considered the fifteen thousand pounds, which her marriage would have wiped out of their books altogether, as an uncomfortable debt which had now to be paid—some time. But as for any open act of hostility on the part of Mr. Hunter, in spite of Mrs. St. John's fretful forebodings which were only temper, counting on his love for Georgie too confidently, they expected it as little as a snow-storm in July. When, therefore, they received Mr. Pike's letters, the one addressed to Mr. Fenton and the other to Mr. St. John, requiring repayment of the moneys advanced to them by Mr. Samuel Harmer Hunter at their earliest possible convenience, which meant inconvenience, it was as though a live bomb-shell had burst among them, and they did not at first know how much any one had suffered.

'This is your doing!' said Mrs. St. John to Georgie, showing her the letter and not sorry to make her the first victim. 'See what your wickedness has brought on poor father! You have ruined him, and us, and every one!' she added, with a vague generality of despair.

'I am very sorry, Carry,' replied Georgie kindly, a little frightened too; 'but I cannot see how I can help it.'

'Yes, you can; you see and know quite well, so don't be a hypocrite!' said sister Carry, tartly. 'If you would do as you ought; if you were a good, and dutiful, and virtuous girl, and say that you would marry Mr. Hunter, do you think there would be any more annoyance then?'

'But I cannot marry him,' said Georgie, firmly.

'How can you talk such non-

sense, and tell such stories!' cried her sister. 'Why do you not say "will not" instead of "cannot"?' I suppose there is nothing to hinder you but your own obstinacy and wicked self-will.'

'Yes, there is,' said Georgie, 'there is honour.'

'Bah!' said her sister, 'you are a perfect idiot, Georgina! I declare you are!'

'Well, I cannot, and I will not marry a man I do not love, because you speculated on my doing so, and borrowed money which now you have to pay,' cried Georgie, with spirit. 'If you think it right to try and sell your sister for so many thousands, I am not disposed to allow myself to be bought!'

Whereat she walked out of the room in anger, and her sister saw her no more for that morning.

Anger, indeed, was the prevailing feeling just now at the Hall. Mr. Fenton was angry with his daughter, St. John, for having lured him by false hopes to ask this loan of Mr. Hunter; he was angry with his son-in-law for countenancing it, and with the iron merchant for acceding to it; and most of all was he angry

with little Georgie, hitherto the light of his eyes, for harbouring a naughty love for an undesirable young man whom he had dismissed, and for refusing to make things straight by not following her plain line of duty. Mrs. St. John was angry with her father for not insisting, with Mr. Hunter for not persevering, and with St. John with whom she was always angry neither more nor less than usual; but she, too, most of all with Georgie for refusing. And Georgie was angry with all of them, for the cool way in which she had been disposed of, bought and sold like a bale of merchandize, and mortgaged even before possession. So that spirits were not very cool or comfortable at this time, and the future looked as dark and stormy as the present. One thing only seemed too certain—Mr. Samuel Harmer Hunter was not going to play the generous creditor: and, though not a cruel man, nor a bad one, still, it was evident that he would rather reduce his old friends to the dust and ashes of ruin for revenge, than quietly lose his money to benefit the family of Roger Lewin's future wife.



THE PLAYGROUNDS OF EUROPE.

The Low Pyrenees.

If you are an invalid, and put your faith in medicated rinsings, whether applied in- or ex-ternally, you had better go to Cauterets, Bagnères de Bigorre, or St. Sauveur, and do there as invalids do. Once arrived there, you surrender yourself, body and soul, into the hands of the local water doctor. You are *his*; you belong no more to yourself; you are under his complete and sole direction. You steep and soak your person the prescribed number of minutes, and swallow your appointed quantity of mineral broth, flavoured with rotten eggs.

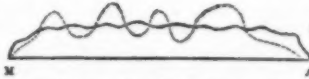
But you are not an invalid, gentle reader, I hope. You don't want any waters, sulphureous or saline. You wish to see the Pyrenees themselves; and not to be pumped, purged, or douched, by a course of Pyrenean thermal springs. Get, then, to Pau as fast as you can (second class, from Boulogne, 89 fr. 90 c.; third class, 65 fr. 90 c.).

To beguile the time on the way, you may like to have a few general notions of what you are going to see. The Pyrenees are not Switzerland. The Alps are a country, a whole, a mountainous *area*; they can boast superficial as well as longitudinal extent; they are not merely a backbone, but a body also. The Pyrenees are not a country, but merely an incidental object in a country; very striking and remarkable truly, but still only a thing included in a greater whole, partly a portion of France, and partly of Spain.

For the ground plan of the Pyrenees, conceive the skeleton of a fish—of a sole, for instance. The vertebral line is the central ridge; while each of the ribs is a smaller ridge branching out into the plain, and gradually sinking into it. Between each rib is a deep valley, often very beautiful, and often of varied character. To follow the central mountain chain in anything like a straight line or a near approach, you have, therefore, to make a series of ups and downs, like the

pitchings of a boat in a heavy sea; only the *cols*, as they are called, over which you pass from one valley to the other, are high enough to test the quality of the pedestrian's legs, and even to task those of the mule or the ass. This conformation is, however, more regular on the French than on the Spanish side of the range.

In other respects, the Pyrenees differ from the Alps. The latter have the highest peaks, but also the deepest gaps between them, allowing of many passes and carriage-roads known to everybody, as the Simplon, the Splügen, &c. The Pyrenees are a wall with few indentations, and those not deep ones; so that, to cross them, you must mount to very high elevations. Carriage-roads over them, into Spain, are *being made* in one or two places, as at Gavarnie and the Baths of Panticosa; but you can scarcely *drive* over the Pyrenees as yet, except at the two ends, near the respective seas. Thus, *M* is the Mediterranean, *A* the Atlantic. The dotted line



gives the profile of the Alps, as compared with that of the Pyrenees.

The Pyrenees are situated four degrees of latitude nearer to the equator than Switzerland. The polestar, at Pau and Tarbes, is appreciably and perceptibly lower in the sky and nearer to the horizon than at London. The foot of this chain of mountains is bathed at one end by the Mediterranean, at the other by the Atlantic. Their climate may, therefore, be expected to prove both milder and warmer; their level of eternal snow is higher. They may be explored with pleasure, and also with safety, earlier in spring and later in autumn. A feature which instantly strikes the eye is that *box* is the national plant of the Pyrenees. It grows in such abundance in the valleys, as to be

used as firing by the peasants. During winter and early spring it must greatly add to the verdure and brightness of the scenery. Box walking-sticks, on sale, almost thrust their handles into your grasp. The iron-pointed *bâtons de montagne* are staffs of box, tough but heavy, more for use than show, unlike their smarter cousins, the Swiss alpenstocks, which are such a nuisance on board steamers and in hotel vestibules, and with which fair tourists do you the honour to transfix your toes. 'It is all very well,' you exclaim, 'to dissemble your love; but why do you poke me with your alpenstock?'

The self-sown box shrubs which stud the hill sides vary considerably in character. There are small-leaved, larger-leaved, stiff, compact, upright, pendant, and almost weeping varieties. Little seedling boxes, two or three inches high, tempt you to transfer them to your garden. But I refrain from any further description, lest any of your friends should request you to fetch some. At my last visit to the Spanish frontier, an acquaintance asked me to bring back a small trifle—only a live Merino sheep!

Many mountains are vexatious, because you can't get at them; the Pyrenees are particularly so. At a great distance—as at Pau or Tarbes—they rear themselves before you in a goodly row; you can count their peaks and learn their names. But as you approach, they hide themselves. The nearer you go, the further you are off from having a close look at them. You stand at their feet, and they are invisible. In order to measure them from top to toe, you must raise yourself almost to the level of their own stature, and that at a respectful distance. The peculiar formation of the Pyrenees is well seen, from a distant point of view, at sunrise. The changing effects of light and shade enable you to behold the direction in which the ridges run, and the deep gaps which separate them.

Circumstances will mostly compel the tourist to perform the flight from London to Pau, each in his

own particular way. Travelling by night, in summer, to reach your starting-point, has the advantage of coolness. During a frost, a railway carriage can be easily warmed; during the dogdays, it is less easy to cool it. On arriving at the termination of the iron road, if you are several, hiring a carriage is pleasanter than taking a public conveyance, and often quite as cheap. Not only are the Pyrenean diligences uncertain, varying their prices and their hours of starting according to the presence or the absence of customers, but, in order to fall in with the railway trains, they often start and arrive at frightfully early, late, and certainly inconvenient hours.

But what a change of climate in that long sweep across the whole of France! you leave Boulogne with a mizzling rain blowing aslant your carriage windows; people have their heads tied up for epidemic face-ache; they can't get in their corn. All the doing of the gusty south-westerns coming in from the Gulf Stream, and laden with moist ill-humours which they vent on the first persons and lands they meet with.

At Abbeville, you fairly quit the sea. The sky clears. At Amiens, it is bright sunshine. At Paris, you complain of the heat. Quick! traverse Paris without a halt! jump into the Orleans railway, and at Orleans you find a brilliant atmosphere, grapes three sous the pound, and two-year old red wine nine sous the bottle.

You rush onwards to Tours on wings of steam. La Belle Touraine, the garden of France, is a fruit-garden only—except at the season when the blossoms which precede those fruits render it a flower-garden. Just now, the patches of Teinturier grape (the dyer, because it colours the wine) are a distinctive feature of foliage; and lovers of tinged-leaved creeping plants might adopt it with advantage for bowers and verandahs, especially if mingled with clematis and roses.

The beauty of the Touraine, in the eyes of the natives, consists in the abundance of its produce. It combines the *utile dulci*, the useful with

the pleasant; and, therefore, *omne tulit punctum* carries every point. Still, the glimpses of the river Loire, caught soon after leaving Blois, are fine, because the picture is bounded with a framework of forest.

Hastening to our destination, we meet other fellow-creatures out on their last excursion—a train full of four-footed passengers, the cream-coloured oxen of the south, bound for Paris, with so many stone of beef and suet as their only baggage. The comforts of these travellers are attended to. They have plenty of air at the sides of their carriage, with a good roof and curtains in case of bad weather. The pooriness of the sandy soil is betrayed by the presence of pinasters, which, sowing themselves, soon produce a natural undergrowth of forest.

From Tours to Poitiers is a great goose country, as ought to be the case in a land of *pâtés*. If its inhabitants are not geese, certainly geese are its inhabitants. Numerous groups of those ill-understood birds may be seen grazing and promeneading with a fair Poitevine gooseherdess at their tail. Women come to market laden with their spoils, and furnished with wings enough to lift them in the air, if they could only be set going by machinery. They are not dipterous but polyopterous females. Multitudinous turkeys also tread, in false security, the treacherous soil, beneath which truffles, like fate, await them. Jerusalem artichokes are grown *for cattle only*; the people will not eat them as a vegetable. Indeed, it is only within the last four or five years that their culture for any purpose has been introduced. In nothing is prejudice in France more strongly manifested than in articles of diet. While they feed on sorrel-soup and feast on *escargots* (the large buff-shelled snail), they are, as a nation, ignorant of sea kale, and refuse to comprehend the merits of rhubarb tart.

Hereabouts, the fertility of the land may be seen typified in a single group. A woman, with a baby sitting on her left arm, and followed by another who can just run alone,

will lead, with her right hand, a milch-ewe in such a way as just to let it browse on the superabundant vine-twigs without being able to get at the grapes. The vines begin to be grown in a rough sort of currant-bush style. There is a curious mixture of the trivial and the poetical, the homely and the exquisite—potatoes and peaches, cabbages and maize, with gourds and pumpkins looking like great golden eggs that the celebrated goose had laid astray, whilst their happy proprietor struts amongst them, proud of the smartness of his Sunday sabots. Every station is adorned with choice trees and shrubs; but—I hope their ways are mended now—last summer the railroad from Angoulême to Bordeaux shook the very teeth out of your head.

The character of Bordeaux is Southern French, combined with wealth and old respectability. The warmth of the summer climate causes a great employment of curtains, jalousies, persiennes, venetian shutters, and other means of keeping out sunshine and admitting air. The houses are lofty; some of the streets are wide; in which case trees afford a welcome shade. But no Bordelais will complain of his climate; in the first place, it is the foundation (through the intermediate agency of the vine) of his great commercial prosperity; and, secondly, it enables him to sport washing waistcoats and white pantaloon, and his wife to trail summer skirts along the pavement, when the North is wrapping itself in *paletôts* and shawls, and entertaining serious thoughts of fur. Everywhere, the predominant importance of wine and vinous products is visible. Innumerable casks, ranged side by side, make you think of George III.'s question, 'How far would they reach, placed end to end?'.

The Bordelais type of personal appearance has dark brown or black eyes, clear, pale, olive complexion, black hair, often crispy-curly, fair well-kept hands, full lips, and largeish nose, neither Greek nor Roman.

One leading institution of Bordeaux is the Theatre. The Place de

la Comédie, if not the geographical, is the social centre of the town. Operas, and ballets especially, are admirably given, with a magnificence of costume nowhere excelled. The *salle* or audience part of the house is one of the handsomest, though not the largest, in Europe. The vestibule is an architectural monument. It must edify melanophobic American visitors to find in the orchestra a coal-black violinist, who perfectly performs his part, and to whom his white colleagues speak civilly. Per contra, the regular *abonné* or subscriber to the Bordeaux Theatre holds to his rights of criticism, and is foolish enough and brutal enough to make free use of the abominable *sifflet* or condemnatory whistle.

There is a Botanic Garden, centrally situated, which serves as a pleasant public walk. Outside the town is a Parc where—during the absence of beasts and birds, fishes and reptiles, to be purchased and acclimatized by the drawing of a lottery—the municipality does what it can to acclimatize Sunday music. As you run, you may read flaring evidence of Bordeaux's cosmopolitan connections. Bisson et Laserre, *coiffeurs*, stick over their door 'Barber Shop,' as if it were a shop for the sale of barbers; adding, moreover, 'Here it is spoken English.' Another hangs out the sign *Au Desir de Plaire*, 'The Desire to Please,' which would puzzle most limners to illustrate pictorially.

But we have not yet reached the Pyrenees. We have still the Landes to cross, a sea of plain, a vast expanse of sterile sand, which is worth seeing once from its impressiveness. If it wearies when skimmed over by rail, what must it have done when crawled through by coach? Its surface is one grand deficit; there is no wheat, no barley, no oats, few pigs, poultry, and sheep, very few cows, and still fewer inhabitants. Some of the hamlets which give their names to stations, are eight or ten miles distant from them. The postmen, striding along on their stilts, complete their round faster than a man could do it on foot. On one spot, Napoleon III. has settled

a colony, building them houses and a church, which look like an island in the midst of an ocean. Even the occasional pine-woods are melancholy and pitiable. The poor trees are bled to death for their resin, which flows from them into earthen pots. As soon as a wound is healed, a fresh one is made, longer and extending higher up the trunk; and so on, till the patient dies of exhaustion. And this is all the country yields, or nearly so. Nevertheless, if the Landes were in England, or even in the north of France, we cannot help believing that they would soon be brought into cultivation."

The few inhabitants of the Landes are eminently a stilted race; for their stilts, instead of being mere playthings, form an integral part of the individual. To deprive a dweller in the Landes of his stilts, would be like robbing an Esquimaux of his snow shoes or a Swiss guide of his alpenstock. They are his only means of getting through the pools of water which would naturally drain into the sea, were they not checked by a line of sandhills. The *lanusquet*, mounted on his lofty *échasses*, runs with prodigious agility. There goes one, as we rattle along! Perched on the top of his lofty poles, he seems as much at home with them as a wading bird is on his lanky legs. By the help of a stick of proportional length, he clears inclosures, fences, walls, and ditches. In the morning, when the hour for starting arrives, he seats himself on the mantelpiece of his chimney or on the highest window-sill of his barn, and coolly rigs his legs with their seven-leagued boots. At rest in the plain, watching his flock, he appears to be sitting on the head of his walking-stick, while he knits a coarse brown woollen cap to replace the shabby one now on his head. A wicker hod, or back-basket, lying beside him, contains an assortment of useful necessities; millet-flour, grease, sardines, maize-bread, and wine, besides a frying-pan for compounding cakes out of the two first-named articles.

Napoleon I., while sojourning at Bayonne, summoned a troop of *la-*

musquets for Josephine's amusement. At a word from the great man, they issued from their deserts. With half a dozen strides, they traversed the little town. Every window was crowded with ladies; but the ladies only vouchsafed them half a smile. To the great surprise of the crowd, they sat down on the ground and rose again, with no other help than that of their stick. When money was thrown to them in the streets, they picked it up while running at full speed upon their stilts. They performed stilt dances before the Emperor and Empress. But they were all soon seized with a fit of home-sickness. The air of the court disagreed with them. The moment that permission was given, they disappeared like wild birds let loose from a cage.

On looking out of window at Rion station, a blue cloudy mass looms up from the horizon. It is a vision conjured up by the gnomes, the nymphs, and the salamanders, to draw us within their influence. We have entered the sphere of the triple attraction of earth, fire, and water combined. The spell draws us onward, as the loadstone island did the iron-nailed ship. Not only we ourselves, but the very train obeys the call. Yielding to the mysterious agency, it rushes with increased velocity to Pau.

But the station is nearly a couple of miles from the town, and you are driven to it in four-horse omnibuses, of such mighty bulk and elevation, that on approaching its narrow streets you doubt the material possibility of their entering them. A camel might as well try the eye of a needle. You do enter, nevertheless, with the consciousness of sweeping everything before you, as the piston of a syringe ejects its contents. The difficulty of this feat of driving is increased by the irregularity with which the town is built; and as you turn a sharp corner, or thread a crooked lane, you complacently behold, through the first-floor windows, the family arrangements that are going on within.

Pau is not in a plain, as people fancy till they have been there, but on an eminence commanding a

broad valley, with a torrential stream rushing through it, and the majestic file of mountains drawn up in front. But first let us think of creature-comforts on reaching the *chef-lieu* of the Low Pyrenees and the ancient capital of Béarn.

In the Rue de la Prefecture are three hotels: de l'Europe, a coaching inn; de la Dorade, a little so, which is not without its convenience; and du Commerce. In other parts of the town are grander hotels, for people with amply garnished purses. Invalids especially, who make a long stay, mostly take furnished apartments, of which there is choice, the whole town being 'To Let.' In all the inns, the price of the rooms varies according to size and situation. At the Hôtel de la Dorade, you may have capital board (two meals) for seven or eight francs per day, with an abundant supply of clean linen, a very liberal table, with plenty of poultry—indeed, I advise the excursionist to abstain from poultry a month before going to the Pyrenees—dessert with all the fruits of the season, and including wine at discretion. This tariff applies, more or less, to all the inns on the French side of the frontier. In some, the supply of wine is limited to half a bottle per meal; if you take more, you pay for it extra. In the watering places, the price, and even the possibility, of chambers depends on the number of foreign arrivals; the table d'hôte charges do not vary with the same.

As a rule, then, the Pyrenean inns are civil, obliging, well-fed, cheap, and cleanly. During my last stay among them, I saw one flea, and did not feel that one. Poor solitary innocent! Who could have had the heart to kill it? Flies are less at a premium. They are even kept at a distance, as much as possible, from dinner tables, by wire covers placed over the most attractive fruits and sweets. In short, their room is preferred to their company. In apartments, a compromise is effected, by stretching tapes, just below the ceiling, from corner to corner of the room. On these tight ropes, like small social

Blondins, they perch and dance with impunity, leaving the whitewash comparatively unspotted.

A stranger must not judge of the inns of the south of France by their outside appearance; he would sometimes not even guess that a certain doorway was really the entrance to an hotel, the front being occupied by shops. In towns where tradesmen hang out signs, the sign of an hotel is less conspicuous. On inquiring the prices of *everything* (a practice which is always wise), the traveller need not fear observing, if those prices do not suit him, that he is looking out for something a little cheaper; when it will often be replied, 'I will let you have the room, or the dinner, for so much less, in order to gain your custom.' One landlady would not drop my chamber a single sou—and the charge was not exorbitant; but she volunteered to board me for a franc less per day; which was treating me to a daily donkey ride, or to an extra glass of wine after a mountain ramble.

Of the Basques I have no personal knowledge; but the peasantry, both of the Low and the High Pyrenees, are mild, honest, and inoffensive. As foot-guides, they are civil and trustworthy. Titon, of Eaux-Bonnes, deserves honourable mention as one of that class. But all the grandest guides are mounted, and refuse to demean themselves by pedestrian excursions. Numbers announce themselves over their doors, as 'Guides of the First Class,' 'Chasseurs,' and even 'Bear Hunters.' Nobody calls himself a Second-Class Guide; if you were to inquire after one, you would be told that none existed. Donkeys, mules, and ponies stand for hire in a sort of wooden wild-beast show. The resemblance is so complete, that you are surprised at not beholding an array of asinine and equine full-length portraits and paying a penny for admission to the menagerie. Carriages profess to be ready to be let 'pour *Tous les Pays*,' for every country. Donkey-women are happy to be engaged for distances approaching that indefinite spot, 'The World's End.'

The country people have the weakness of thatching their cottages with apparently twice as much straw as needs be; but the stratum is probably not too thick to keep out infiltrations of melting snow. Many, when they don't go barefooted, sport sandals, a remnant of old Roman costume. Hill pastures are shorn close, as in Switzerland, the hay in many cases being so fine as to necessitate its being gathered and tied up in sheets for transport home. The shepherds in the lowlands adopt a curious kind of sleeping-place. Not to leave their sheep to the attacks of wolves, they creep into a sort of coffin raised on sticks, and pass the night in an apartment of similar shape and material to that in which they will take their final sleep. Many speak only Béarnais, a language which no Christian stranger would dream of learning, although the natives are extremely proud of it. When they talk French, they talk it 'with a difference,' pronouncing the final letters of many words which are usually allowed to drop unheard; for instance, *Cauterets*, *trois*, *lait*, *préfet*, *tabac*, and many more. As a trait of simple honesty, a traveller who slept at Gabas (a village near the foot of the Pic du Midi d'Ossau, and not very far from the frontier), went out for the day, leaving his *porte-monnaie* containing bank-notes and money on his bedside table. On his return, the people of the inn put it, untouched, where he had left it, with no more fuss or ostentation than if they had laid his nightcap in its proper place.

Bears are in everybody's mouth, and young bears are in some few people's households, in the course of training for street performance. Lately, the Préfet of Perpignan, out on an official tour, passed through a village where his companion, an officer of gendarmerie, recommended to his charity a poor widow, whose husband, an educator of bears, had been killed, and all but devoured, by a pupil, in one of those moments when instinct overpowers the strictest discipline. Families may be well-regulated; nevertheless, accidents will occur.

'I have nothing,' pleaded the woman; 'absolutely nothing—not even a roof to shelter my head and the animal's!'

'The animal's? What animal?' asked the astonished Préfet. 'You don't mean the bear who ate your husband?'

'Alas! Monsieur le Préfet, indeed I do. It's all the poor dear man left me to remember him by!'

The architecture of the villages is not Swiss nor Italian, but Pyrenean, in a style of its own; that is, simple and unpretending, of sober colouring, with a pervading tone of grey, composed of slate-colour and dirty white, with but slight intermixtures of yellow, brown, or green. The mountains, when not bare rock, are sometimes tinged with a purple blush of heath; but nothing to compare with the rich hues of Scotland. Buckwheat, beloved of hilly countries and showery climates, is grown in patches, whose stubble look as if the ground had been burnt. Some of the small 'waters' publish a regulation which is hard for human nature to obey. You are prohibited to trot or gallop 'in town,'—a town which you may cover with your lady's shawl unfolded, and whose total population, in winter time, amounts to three old women and two cats. This 'town' (which is generic, and not special or individual) you are warned not to enter or quit at any other than a foot-pace. Be your donkey's amble ever so elegant, you expose yourself to rebuke if you show it off. Such orders, like lovers' promises, are only made to be broken. You drive a coach-and-four through them with even greater ease than you do through an Act of Parliament. The framers of them show little knowledge of the human heart, and especially of the female heart. Don't they dash in and out—the rosy-cheeked invalids—in spite of municipal prohibitions? Of course it is the steeds' fault, not the ladies'; no bit can check the fiery chargers, who are on their legs, in harness and out of it, eighteen hours out of every seasonal four-and-twenty.

Contrary to all our northern notions, Monday, not Saturday, is Pau's

market-day. To hear the people about you talking Béarnais, you might almost fancy yourself at Peking. The men's national head-dress is a flat cloth cap, with—not a tuft or a tassel in the middle, but a short little tail, much like a mole's. All the hard work of fetching and carrying is done by cows yoked in couples. They are small-horned, cream-coloured, long-tailed, melancholy animals, who, to a certain extent, have a will of their own; they will not be driven, although they may be led. Their conductor is expected to walk before them, holding behind him a long slender switch, with which he taps their yoke from time to time, to wake up their flagging attention. If not so led, they either will not stir at all, or wander just where they are not wanted to—under horses' legs or over foot pavements. It is the same in the open fields, where poor cows are made to plough the land. The man holds the plough, which would stick where it is till doomsday, if the wife did not walk before the beasts, spinning with her distaff to beguile the time as she trudges up and down every single furrow.

The Pau cows wear perukes of various fashion—some frizzled, some straight-haired, some with lappets, and some with Welsh wigs made of woollen cloth. They are also wrapped in short sleeveless chemises, or winding-sheets, to keep off the flies. A few are adorned with veils of network, which hide their meek and suffering countenances, leaving their muzzles only visible.

The Halle, or market of Pau (well worth visiting), is a vast square building, which is admirable for its extreme convenience. With this class of edifices, utility is beauty. A central square, in which several markets are held, is lofty, and therefore airy. It is not too much window-lighted, and is consequently cool, and pervaded with a *clair-obscur* most desirable in a sunshiny climate. The morning fruit and vegetable market is a perfect picture of still-life and *genre*. The women tie up their hair in gaudy handkerchiefs; the men sport cloth bonnets, with the abortive pigtail in the

middle, and red scarfs round their waists. Amongst the local curiosities vended, are long onions, like spindle-shaped sausages pointed at each end. A lady told me they made a dainty dish stewed with pepper, salt, cinnamon, sugar, and caramell! Fun-guses (the edible *boletus*) are sold for two sous each, which very few English market-goers would accept for nothing, or consent to cook and eat for two sovereigns. Doing as they do in the Pyrenees, I have partaken of them; but the *ceps* (as they are called) are quite inferior to a good mushroom. Cayenne pepper, in a green state, is mixed up with young carrots, as if meant to be fricasseed together. Of melting figs—green, blue, and violet—more than you can eat are to be had for a sou. Tomatoes, of course, are plenty, as well as another member of the great *Solanum* or potato family, the aubergine, an excellent vegetable (fruit) scarcely known in England.

By no means take your departure from Pau without visiting the public walks and Henri IV.'s Château. To encourage you to present yourself without hesitation, I copy (and translate) a notice which is hung in the very first room you enter.

'Entrance to the apartments and dependences of the Imperial Palaces is essentially gratuitous. The public is, therefore, earnestly requested not to present any gratification to the attendants on duty. They are forbidden to receive it; and they would expose themselves to severe punishment by transgressing this regulation.'

Let me add that the persons who conduct strangers over the castle are extremely polite, attentive, and obliging.

The next stage is a real start for the mountains, which we have hitherto only been beholding. During the summer there is plenty of coaching and other competitive conveyances. From Pau, you have English verdure, hedges, and wayside trees, *not* lopped; and, for a while, a footpath on the side of the road, which is rare in France. The presence of pedestrians is mostly ignored. At Servignac, you find your-

self at last in the midst of mountain scenery; and at Louvie the Val d'Ossau begins.

Quenching my thirst there in the Gave d'Ossau, its brilliant water, like a liquid diamond, had to my palate quite a mineral taste. It is probable that, in dry seasons, all the streams which descend from the Pyrenees are appreciably charged with saline elements; and, therefore, that you take 'the waters' unconsciously, without their being prescribed for you, whether you will or no.

To sip the stream, a maiden lent me a tin ladle with a long hollow handle. On making use of it for drinking, I found myself mysteriously besprinkled, and then discovered that the handle was not only hollow, but perforated at the end, to be used, I guess, for laying the dust inside the house. I inquired; but the highland damsel either could not, or would not speak French. I being profoundly ignorant of her patois, our dialogue was that of the deaf and dumb.

The Pyrenees, when once you get amongst them, are found to be closely packed together, as mountains. They are less pretentious, more modest than the Alps. They look less vain of their personal appearance, and do not so ostentatiously lay themselves out for general admiration. They don't seem to strive to attract the public gaze; and make no violent attempts to call attention to themselves by tricks of adornment and points of coquetry, which say as plain as language can speak, 'Come and look at me! See how very handsome I am!' Nevertheless, in addition to their native beauties, they are trimmed here and there with foreign decorations. Thus, between Eaux Chaudes and Bonnes, the roadside is planted not only with plane trees and Carolina poplars, but also with Banksian roses, to climb in festoons over the rock; while that great comfort, a good footpath, is bordered with cotoneasters, altheas, and other ornamental shrubs and flowers. Birds, however, are scarce in the Pyrenees; indeed, there would appear to be more bears than birds.

The Val d'Ossau is an example that the aspect of the Pyrenees is more meridional than that of the Alps. The colouring is less contrasted and more harmonious. The grey, slate-roofed villages are in perfect keeping with the sober and unobtrusive tone of the landscape. The streams also (except after heavy rains), are bright and clear; whereas Alpine brooks, when they do not run out of lakes, are often perennially opaque and muddy—witness the Black and White Lütchinen, which descend from the valleys of Lauterbrunnen and Grindenvald.

The approach to Eaux Chaudes, and the situation of the village, resemble that of the Via Mala, Switzerland, on a small scale—a mountain cleft in two, with a torrent running at the bottom of the chink. Eaux Chaudes itself (so called, perhaps, because its springs are amongst the coolest of Pyrenean waters), consists of a couple of parallel streets and the Thermal Establishment, all on the right bank of the Gave, or stream. Its site is so narrow and confined, that the increase of the village would be difficult; nevertheless, attempts are made to squeeze in a few houses more, by blasting the rock, and filling up the side of the chasm with rubbish. Of private garden-ground there may exist a few square yards. Fruit and vegetables are brought in from afar. Eaux Chaudes does not produce enough of the latter to maintain a family of rabbits. There is a church, but no cemetery; there is not room even to bury people upright. Consequently, the inhabitants die as seldom as they can—some even deferring that event until after the celebration of their hundredth birthday.

In the Pyrenees it is quite impossible to forget, put down, or escape 'the waters'; you had better, therefore, grasp your nettle and look them boldly in the face. When there is a run on the baths, it is well to fix your hour beforehand. A bell rings a few minutes before every hour, to remind bathers of their engagements. If you remain in steep half an hour, your undressing and redressing just allow you to vacate

the place for another. The bath fills while you are preparing to enter it. When you are coddled enough, you ring, and the attendant brings you, in a tin box, a hot wrapping gown with sleeves, and two hot towels. Ablutions thus leisurely and comfortably performed are a pleasant way of killing time, when you have nothing better to do.

At Eaux Chaudes, the Strangers' Book repeatedly recommends you to 'try the taters.' One enthusiastic annotator states that he found them 'as fine-flavoured as any he ever tasted in Ireland.' At Luz, and at several other places, I strongly advise you to try the donkeys. The donkey business there is extensive, and, like government with bees, is entirely confined to the female line. The donkeys are all *anesses*, or she's; their proprietresses are women who hang about the corners of streets, or sit on doorsteps, singly or in groups, with their heads tied up in handkerchiefs, but with no sign of their asinine occupation, outward or visible. Experience, however, taught me that if a woman had a little bit of dry stick tucked under her arm, the same was a hireess of one or more she-asses.

These asses are not milch asses. These who give suck to invalids are not allowed to weaken their constitutions by up-and-downhill work. The saddle-asses congregate all by themselves in a corner, round an empty dray and a few hollow tubs, at which they sorrowfully smell, close to a running fountain, from which they do not condescend to drink, awaiting the moment to make an ascent or descent; for at Luz it is all either upwards or downwards. To Barèges is six and a half kilometres uphill (stiff); to Gavarnie nineteen (steady and serpentine); to Tarbes forty-nine downhill, and of course to intermediate stations, at various distances, the same. The she-asses, selected for amiability (for the males like *ces Messieurs*, the gentlemen, are apt to be untoward), have still a few by-laws of their own, to which they strictly and conscientiously adhere. They will not carry a man's saddle; that is, their dignity refuses to be

bestriden; nor will they wear an English side-saddle. If fitted with either of the above they protest, like the overlaid camel, by lying down. They must have the *fauteuil*, the chair side-saddle of the country, resembling that into which we put our English babies, but which is used here by ladies and gentlemen indifferently. It is a little hard (like a third-class railway bench), but not otherwise an unpleasant seat; only it tempts you to sit too backward, which gives you a chance of falling heels over head.

There is great competition in the donkey line, and the competing rivals naturally treat each other with an outward suavity, which is sometimes combined (as Chesterfield recommended) with an expressional *fortiter in re* very edifying to the customer.

On stepping out of the *Hôtel de l'Univers*, with the intention of proceeding to Barèges on foot, before I could cross the bridge over the Gave, a matron asked me whether I would have a donkey. 'I thank you, no,' was my reply. But as soon as I had crossed the bridge another charmer put the same question. Second thoughts induced me to utter the word, 'How much?'

'Thirty sous to Barèges and back.

If you wait here I will fetch the donkeys in a minute.'

'Good. Fetch them.'

While looking, like Horace's rustic, for the river under the bridge to run itself dry, another dame sidled up to me and asked, 'How much does she make you pay per donkey?'

'What does it matter,' I said, 'to you what I pay? Suppose I choose to give twenty francs?'

'You shall have my donkeys for twenty sous.'

Meanwhile the expected beasts of burden came, and I informed their owner of the offer that had been made.

'Take them, then,' she said, indignantly, 'and I will lead mine back again. It is all competition, wickedness, spite. Hers are only ugly donkeys, ill-conditioned, mangy, lean, whereas mine—'

'Well, well, I ordered them, and

of course intend to take them.' So I mounted Mignonne, a thoroughbred grey, with a coal-black Balaam's stroke across her shoulders, and aged five years and four months, odd days being omitted from her certificate of birth. The lady owner accompanied us, a little girl leading Mignonne; so that I had in every way the pleasure of female company and conversation. Mignonne went extremely well, and I patted her neck in acknowledgment; nevertheless I observed that my young attendant was continually performing some mystic operation behind.

'What is that?' I said at last. 'Give me that; we go very well without it.' On which, with a little further pressing, she yielded me an enormous pin.

'Thank you,' I said; 'I mean to keep it. How would you like any one to spur you with this?'

Poor Mignonne (who perfectly understood French) turned one ear to listen to the dialogue, and then nodded approvingly, as much as to say, 'What a Solomon I am bearing on my back! He's a second Daniel come to judgment!'

While the female donkeys thus move in polite society all summer long, he-asses, as well as mules, are employed to bring down wood from the hills. You see them continually descending with crinolines of brushwood swinging behind them, and sometimes accompanied by sheep, with enormous bottle-shaped bells at their necks.

Eaux Chaudes differs from Eaux Bonnes in one important particular. The majority of strangers at the former place appear to be there on serious business, namely, the business of getting well, which, in some cases, looks as if it would not be easily accomplished. Many belonging to the humbler classes are devotees to the shrine of Hygeia. The Bath-house is a sort of bazaar. You enter and find a motley group of peasants, guides, loungers of all kinds, bathing-men and women, and invalids. There is a scanty show of religious medals, Bearna's scarfs, handkerchiefs, ribbons, and sundry what-nots for sale. If you wish to bathe you take your ticket

at an office to the right (one franc the bath, four sous the linen) of the 'farmer' of the waters. If you wish to drink, the beverage is gratis here, although not so everywhere. You have only to bring your cup, go to the bin which best suits your palate, turn the cock, and taste the nectar.

Generally every spring or water has its name. There are three different waters in the Eaux Chaudes establishment—the Esququette, the Rey, and the Clot—all reputed to be 'exciting and agitating' (though to a less degree than many other Pyrenean waters, whence their value); the first the least, and the last the most so. People are cautioned to be prudent, both in their inward and outward application. I tried the Rey (being in perfect health) for three successive days, and felt no other effects than those of an ordinary tepid bath. But it is really unwise to trifle with these springs, as it is with sea or river bathing. Their water is beautifully clear and soft, with a peculiar smell, which can hardly be called disagreeable.

Outside, and below the Hôtel Baudot—an excellent and reasonable hotel, with a kind and atten-

tive landlady—there is also the spring Baudot, whither drinkers resort with great assiduity, to indulge in the pleasure of warm-water topping.

Weather does not interrupt the process. All one morning the rain beat incessantly; notwithstanding which, at their stated hour, invalid drinkers repair each to their favourite spring, some to the establishment, and others, armed with vast umbrellas or hobbling on crutches, to the Source Baudot, to quaff their glass—fourth, fifth, or sixth—with the same regularity as they would tell their beads or observe their meal times. One asks oneself whether the wetting outside will not do them more harm than the wetting inside can do them good. But with the humbler invalids especially, these visits to the spring seem almost as much a devotional as a medicinal act. In the majority of cases they are doubtless accompanied by prayers and vows addressed to some favourite virgin or saint, and any cure which may follow regarded as miraculous. Faith, as well as therapeutic agents, exerts its healing efficacy.

MY LADY'S SONG.

'Farewell, heroes! farewell, kings!
And mighty numbers, mighty things!
Love tunes my heart just to my strings.'
COWLEY'S *First 'Anacreontique.'*

LET my lady's song be of heroes,
But not of the tented field;
Let her sing of lists where the victors
Fight for the honour to yield.
Let her sing of the shock of battle,
Where the winning heart is lost;
Of the strife that knows no striving
But the strife of loving most.

Let my lady's song be of summer,
But not of the scorching heat;
Let her sing of the floating perfumes,
Of the flowers, and all things sweet.
Let her sing of the Sun in his glory,
But not where he withers the lea;
Let her sing how he hangs on the mountain,
And how he kisses the sea.

My Lady's Song.

Let her sing of Diana on Latmos,
 Not of Luna alone in the skies;
 Let her sing of Endymion waking—
 Love chasing sleep from his eyes.
 Let her sing of the stars as they cluster,
 But not as they wander apart;
 Of all things in earth and in heaven
 That symbol a heart and a heart.

Let my lady sing what she listeth—
 The sun, or the moon, or the grove,
 The mountain, the fountain, the summer—
 Still to my ear it is love.
 As the depths of a thousand blossoms
 Give up one sweet to the bee,
 So the words of her changeful legends
 Have an echo of love for me.

Like a dry tree that stretcheth its leaflets
 To take of the dew of the south,
 So my ear is athirst for the music
 That flows from the gates of her mouth.
 And, soft though the melody ripples,
 As a lake by the evening fanned,
 This, this is its charm, that it trembles
 From the touch of her speaking hand.

Ah! love, when the crimson of rapture
 Flushes out to the marble brow;
 When thy hand is strong as the summer,
 And thy voice with thy soul is aglow;
 When thy heart is at surest and bravest,
 And thy lyre most mellow and free,
 Let thy voice roll forth as a torrent,
 Sing then of my love for thee.

But, ah! when thy heart is the tenderest,
 And thine eye is a fainting star;
 When thy soul is in arms against silence,
 And thy love is with coyness at war;
 When I would not press thee for phrases
 That would call up a blush to thee,
 Let thy lyre, well taught by thy fingers,
 Quiver thy passion for me.

Let my lady sing what she listeth—
 The sun, or the moon, or the grove,
 The mountain, the fountain, the summer—
 Still to my ear it is love.
 As the depths of a thousand blossoms
 Give up one sweet to the bee,
 So the words of her changeful legends
 All echo of love to me.

A. H. G.

DIPLOMACY AND FASHION.

'AND, after all, my dear fellow, you know you have only come out for a lark.' This was the intelligent remark addressed by one young attaché to another on a certain occasion. The young attaché to whom it was addressed substantially repeated the remark to his ambassador, translating the slang term into language more diplomatic. The ambassador, a grave, kindly man, was at some pains to refute such a mischievous dogma. The two attachés were respectively after the model of the Idle and the Industrious Apprentices. In the foreign service diplomacy and fashion are inseparably intermixed. But one of these young gentlemen preferred the fashionable element, the other preferred the diplomatic element. The one will buzz and sparkle for a few seasons, and having thus made his diplomacy useful for purposes of fashion, will leave the public service and retire into the comparative obscurity of his own private position. We will venture to say of the other, that though his promotion may be slow and capricious, it will come at last, and he will have the pleasure of looking back upon 'a career.'

The scene was Madrid. The two young men had been busy at the chancellerie, and one of them disliked business, and argued against business. They belonged to the Pollos of Madrid society. And what is the Pollos? Somewhat disrespectfully, the word conveys the notion of young men who are simply *chickens*, young men of the flirting and dancing order. These young men certainly danced and flirted. They were to be seen, night after night, at the tertulias of Madrid society. They duly promenaded the Prado and Fuente Castellana. Last summer they had enjoyed their flying excursions to Aranjuez and La Granja. They had been often at the Countess of Montijo's at Caramanchel, and had been introduced to the exalted lady who was once Countess of Teba. They were to be found wherever there was a

cloud of moire antique silks and point lace flounces, carrying out the Madrid conception of the duties of the Pollos. In the daytime they were generally dashing about the streets together in a berlina. Yet in the midst of this dissipation of fashion, one of these young men is developing a strong diplomatic taste, and is acquiring a great deal of the necessary knowledge.

And let me say that the necessary knowledge to be possessed by a young diplomatist is something very considerable. Lord Geoffrey Plantagenet is expected to know, and really does know, quite as much as an average writer of leading articles in a daily paper. Bloxson, B.D., was to examine him, and therefore it is quite as well that the Plantagenet should know something about things; for Bloxson considers himself—with justice—a very well-informed man, and has a great notion of being well posted up in the leading foreign questions of the time. It seems only the other day when he examined our Madrid friend. He was examining 'a whole lot of fellows' for her Majesty's service. Lord Geoffrey was seated between two honest fellows who had got appointments in the Custom-house. There was Biggs, whose father is churchwarden and cheesemonger in a snug little borough that returns a Radical member of Parliament, which Radical member has been almost like a father to him. There is Miggs, who has similarly endeared himself to some influential member of the national legislature. Biggs and Miggs went through a fearful amount of arithmetical puzzles, in order to insure their desks at Somerset House. Lord Geoffrey, between the two, was covering sheet after sheet with an account of all the principal treaties of Europe during the last two hundred years. Biggs turned pale when he looked at the paper of questions; but Miggs, who is affable, proposed to Lord Geoffrey, that if he had finished, he and Lord Geoffrey should play at tit-tat-to

together till four o'clock. Let us say for Lord Geoffrey that his examination had been a very hard one. He had done an amount of work for it which would have insured him a first class at Oxford and Cambridge. The genius of competitive examination, a genius of very unpleasant description, is abroad, and is sorely troubling the ornamental classes. I have heard stories from gentlemen of the old school, of bishops who have privately ordained their own gardeners, and secretaries of legation who could hardly write a grammatical note. Now let us sum up what Lord Geoffrey had to do. Of course he had to do *precis*, whatever *precis* may happen to mean. He must be a fair Latin scholar. He had to show himself a good linguist, knowing French and German pretty perfectly, with the examiner's kind permission to add Italian if he liked. He must diligently have perused the Bishop of Natal's works on Elementary Mathematics. He must know an immensity of international law—thanks to Jeremy Bentham, who coined the phrase—the highest kind of all law, to be gleaned from sundry bulky volumes. Then he must have a minute acquaintance with the whole of modern European history since the epoch of the Restoration—a subject so vast and undefined that a man may spend any number of years in seeking to master it completely. Such an examination is one of almost unexampled variety and difficulty.

And what will a grateful country give to a scion of the aristocracy who has manfully achieved all this in her behalf? The grateful country will give just nothing at all, this official income being payable, I presume, quarterly. That is to say, the attaché must serve a probation of four years before he gets any salary at all, and then, according to the new regulations, he will no longer be paid attaché, but second secretary. It will therefore be readily seen that the official income must be helped from private sources, even when a man has become entitled to his hundred and fifty a year. In addition to his examination, he must have served in the

Foreign Office, and have resided abroad three years, and have earned a certificate from the minister under whom he has served. I really think the country drives a tolerably hard bargain with those who thus serve her. Of course there must be contingent advantages. Of course the members of the service must be recruited from a privileged class. Very few men, comparatively, will enter a service where they must spend, say, at least four or five hundred a year more than their income. Accordingly the Upper Ten enjoy the practical monopoly of the foreign and diplomatic service. A very large number never have any money dealings with the British public. They do not stay long enough in the service. They are content with the great social advantages which they derive from the period for which they served. They travel under the best auspices, and mix freely with the best society of European capitals. This is the great object of many men in entering the diplomatic service. Thus, at the very outset, diplomacy and fashion go together. And this is not only the case with young attachés, but ambassadors and envoys act on the principle of the inseparable connection. This has always been the case in the history of diplomacy. Take up the 'Memoirs of Segur,' French ambassador at St. Petersburg before the Empire; the society furnished by the diplomatic service was incomparably the best in the Russian capital. After the fall of the first Empire, how fashion and diplomacy went hand in hand! Lord Castlereagh's parties were among the most important political transactions of the time. They were much better than any parties given by the Emperor of Austria. Lady Castlereagh was as potent an influence almost as the Emperor Alexander himself. I imagine diplomacy and fashion are inextricably mixed up at the *réunions* of the Viscountess Palmerston, and the same was as conspicuously the case with the Princess Lieven and the Princess Esterhazy.

The diplomatic service, to my mind, affords, perhaps, the noblest

career at the present day. This is especially the case since the old traditions of the service have been exploded. The old diplomatic policy of ambiguity, chicanery, circumvention has been superseded, in the English service at least, by frank and fearless open dealing. An English gentleman need never more be an English gentleman than when engaged in the diplomatic service of his country. In the society of a foreign court he cannot do his country a better service than by personally conveying a clear impression of simplicity, self-reliance, kindly feeling, and good faith. To do one's work fully at a foreign court requires both a scholarly and accurate acquaintance with the history of that country, and a quick and accurate perception of the state of the various political parties in the country. If the first is derived from books, the second must be derived from society. The diplomatic element and the fashionable element are, I repeat, inseparable, and after a time this element of fashion becomes serious history. One sees this in Mr. Froude's recent volumes, where the Spanish ambassador—to take an instance—sends all the way to the Escorial an account of the careless conversation that took place during a water party on the Thames. But then the interlocutors were Robert Dudley, de Feria, and Queen Elizabeth. Things may be different at Windsor Castle or Osborne House; but a fashionable gathering at Fontainebleau or Compiègne has always the highest diplomatic importance.

Words spoken to any member of the diplomatic circle within the Tuileries have often the most serious import. How anxiously have the words of the present Emperor been always scanned on New Year's Day! It is not many years since, when, on one of these occasions, words were dropped which excited a painful sensation throughout all Europe, and were the precursors of European war and of agitations in the political atmosphere which never since have fully cleared away. As it is with the present Napoleon, so it was with the first. Recall, for in-

stance, Lord Whitworth's account of a memorable public reception at the Tuileries. 'The First Consul accosted me evidently under very considerable agitation . . . He immediately said, "And so you are determined to go to war?" "No," I replied, "we are too sensible of the advantages of peace!" "Nous avons," said he, "*déjà fait la guerre pendant quinze ans.*" As he seemed to wait for an answer, I observed only, "*C'en est déjà trop.*" "Mais," said he, "*vous voulez la faire encore quinze ans, et vous m'y forcez.*" All this passed loud enough to be overheard by two hundred persons who were present.' I have no doubt my readers made themselves acquainted with the remarkable despatches sent by the English Minister, Sir Henry Seymour, at the Court of St. Petersburg to his government at home, previous to the Crimean war. The best kind of ambassadorial art is there admirably displayed. The English minister watched with the eagerness of a sleuthhound every word that fell from the imperial lips, and with the utmost adroitness interposed a courteous question, which, if unanswered, would convey an answer by significant silence.

But more authoritative language than ours shall sum up the connexion between fashion and diplomacy. 'It is the characteristic and peculiar charm of diplomacy that the enjoyments of society combine in it with the interests of political life and superficial relaxations with serious labours. Not only does the representative of a state, in a foreign land, find himself placed at the outset in the highest society of the country in which he resides, but he is naturally incited, and led to hold that society in great estimation. To render it agreeable to himself, and to win success there, he must please; he must establish in the bosom of that indifferent world relations and habits approaching to intimacy; he must gain a personal importance which may become a power in his mission. For him, cares apparently frivolous are a necessary pre-occupation. He commits an error, if, in the drawing-

room and in the midst of festivals, the thought of business is not present to his mind. A passing conversation may serve him as much as an official interview; and the impressions he leaves on the world through which he passes are scarcely less important to him than the arguments he develops in a ministerial tête-à-tête. These are the words of M. Guizot. He was himself eminently successful in the line he thus chalked out for a diplomatist. Lady Holland wrote to Paris:—'M. Guizot pleases all the world here, including the queen.' And M. Guizot found out that it was more necessary in England than in any other country, to be successful in fashion if he wished to be successful in diplomacy.

A few notices, comparatively recent, of fashion and diplomacy in our own land and time, which have a special value, are to be found in Guizot's 'Embassy to the Court of St. James's.' The opinion of foreign contemporaries is that which corresponds most nearly in value with the judicial decisions of history. It is impossible that there should be a more calm, clear-sighted, and impartial observer than M. Guizot. When he visited England on his diplomatic mission, singularly enough, it was his first visit to this country. At ten minutes past one on a certain morning, he received a note from Lord Palmerston, saying that at one o'clock *precisely* her Majesty would see him. The queen's message had not been punctually delivered to him. The illustrious Frenchman was greatly, but, it appears, unnecessarily distressed. 'The queen received me with a gracious manner, at once youthful and serious; the dignity of her deportment added to her stature. "I trust, Madam," said I, on entering, "that your Majesty is aware of my excuse, for of myself I should be inexcusable." She smiled as if little surprised at the want of punctuality.' It is to our credit, and contrasts with Lord Clarendon's experience at Madrid, that the more the diplomatic relations between the two countries, at the time of the Syrian difficulty, became disturbed

and involved, the greater was the personal kindness manifested towards the French ambassador. He found, in reference to Lord Melbourne, that the fashionable element predominated over the diplomatic. He first met the fashionable *roué*, then Premier, in Lady Palmerston's drawing-room. He was buried in an easy chair; he listened and talked, and now gently smiled, and now genially laughed. His attention at times even amounted to curiosity. The French minister was earnest and eager; but the sum total of the result was, that he slightly disturbed the nonchalance of the Englishman. He found, however, warm friends 'in the very bosom of the cabinet.' Amid all fashionable movement, diplomatic business steadily advances. A ball is given at Buckingham Palace; Lord Palmerston passed with M. Guizot into a saloon adjoining the gallery; then an important conversation ensued, an account of which occupies six pages of print, and which was immediately reported to the government of M. Thiers, at Paris. In his notices of our society, Guizot has a keen remark on the 'dark passions ever fermenting by the side of these frivolous amusements.' M. Guizot detected a circumstance which has always been a mistake on the part of the great Conservative party, that, compared with the Whigs, they had fewer centres of reunion and intimate conversation. He thought our ministry very nonchalant. A political difficulty of serious magnitude arose. The French ambassador was very anxious to express surprise and compel explanation. 'There was no minister in London. People sleep quite at ease with the ocean behind them. I called on Lord Clarendon, who was not at home; he came to my house an hour after. "My lord," I said to him, "you are the only member of the cabinet I can find." He noticed how the tactics of society were identified with political tactics. Mr. Grote and his radical friends were becoming a power in Parliament. Guizot writes:—"Mrs. Grote is become a person of importance.

Lady Palmerston has invited her to an evening party.' There are one or two interesting personal references. 'When I was wearied with diplomatic conversations, despatches, visits, and the solitude of my own house, I walked alone in the parks of London; Regent's Park particularly pleased me. It is separated from the crowded districts; the space is immense, the verdure fresh, the water clear, the clumps of trees still young. I found these two qualities combined, which rarely associate, extent and grace.' 'The park of Chiswick presents a type of England. Nowhere else have I seen such thick, even, and delicate green sward; it resembles elastic velvet. Lady Clanricarde was at Chiswick entirely enveloped in white muslin, with a single jewel in the centre of her forehead. She was beautiful, and in harmony with her country.'

Let us take another glance at French diplomatic matters. Those who are familiar with Walpolean literature will remember 'Uncle Horace.' He was the younger brother of the great minister, and is sometimes distinguished from his more celebrated but less worthy kinsman, as 'Horace Walpole the Elder.' His experience illustrates several points connected with our subject. Throughout his diplomatic career he maintained that high bearing of an English gentleman, which, above all other points, ought to characterize our English diplomacy. He refused to shuffle out of any assurances which he might have given at the Hague. 'I would rather starve, nay die, than do a thing that gives such a terrible wound to my honour and conscience.' Subsequently, Mr. Walpole went to Paris, ostensibly without any official duties, but in reality to discharge ambassadorial functions. This is a situation in which a diplomatist sometimes finds himself, and is generally very glad to get out of. Its anomalous character is very embarrassing. This Mr. Walpole found to be the case, and requested his recall; the difficulty was obviated by his formal recognition as ambassador. With all his worth, he had two defects, which in diplomatic eyes are cardinal; he

was uncourtly and he was ungraceful. He was in Paris during that great epoch of all scandal, the Regency, and was first there before the death of the infamous churchman Dubois. He was accordingly brought into connexion with the fashionable and diplomatic intrigues of Madame de Tencin and Madame du Pree. He received great help from Bolingbroke, who had married a niece of Madame de Maintenon; and as an exchange of good offices is always supposed in diplomacy, he procured his pardon under the great seal. Walpole was engaged in a peculiarly delicate negotiation of much interest—the scheme of Louis Quinze marrying a princess of England. 'Numbers of all sorts of people have been very watchful and observant of my countenance, words, and carriage, and have endeavoured to turn me all ways, by various questions and insinuations; some by making me compliments, others by desiring my protection here at court, as if the thing was actually done.' The opinion of the ambassador was strongly opposed to the match, and in an important state paper which definitely settled the matter, he pointed out that such an alliance would both be unconstitutional and interfere with our international relations on the Continent. It is very much to Walpole's credit that with Cardinal Fleury, almost the only statesman who relieves the iniquity of this era, he was on intimate personal terms. It is very remarkable, at least to our present notions, to observe how Mr. Walpole regularly quitted his ambassadorial post to attend to his parliamentary duties. We find him taking an active share in the debates, and what would be thought preposterous and intolerable at present, discussing the foreign policy of the government. Mr. Walpole married the daughter of a man whom the Duchess of Marlborough used to speak of as 'my tailor.' It is said the lady was rich; she certainly bore the suggestive name of Lombard. Horace Walpole was able to take this credit to himself, that by skilful diplomacy he had averted a war. A diplomatist can obtain no higher

praise, and cannot propose to himself any higher motive. Indeed, the prevention of war may be regarded as the final cause of all diplomacy, the reason of its institution, and its continued usefulness.

But the scenery of this sketch was first laid at Madrid. I had the intention of confining myself to Spanish ground, and I must reimpose these limits, that I may not wander into the various interesting paths which the subject opens up to us. I think Lord Geoffrey must have been very much surprised when he first visited Madrid. For as we approach London and Paris, the evidences become more and more multiplied that we are approaching a metropolitan city. The gay villas and gardens, the crowded roads, the suburban villages, these insensibly prepare us and inseparably link us to the English or French metropolis. Very different is the case with Madrid. All is solitude up to the very gates of the city. The city itself rises nobly; in a clear rarefied atmosphere, with towers and domes sharply defined against the magnificent range of the Guadarrama mountains. Once upon a time there was a dense forest around, a cover for bears and boars, when the kings of Castile had a royal hunting box, the origin of the capital. It is now a wide, silent, verdant plain, destitute of the trees which the Castilian has learned to hate. But to make Madrid the capital, was, in a double sense of the word, a capital mistake. Had Lisbon been chosen as the metropolis, it would have saved Portugal to the peninsular kingdom. Other Spanish cities, Valladolid, Seville, Granada, Toledo—especially the last—might each have served better. But Charles V. found that the atmosphere suited his gout, and his son Philip, in 1560, declared it the seat of the court. The name of the town, according to an Arabic derivation, is supposed to mean 'running waters;' but unfortunately there are no running waters. The Manzanares is either a swollen torrent in winter, or is quite lost in its summer sandy bed. The place remarkably combines the inconveniences of intolerable heat and

intolerable cold; in the winter it is an ice-house, and in the summer it is an oven. The summer air is the worst. 'The subtle air, which will not extinguish a candle, puts out a man's life. Dry, searching, desiccating and cutting, this assassin breath of death pierces through flesh and bone to the marrow.' To those who love the picturesque, Madrid is greatly less interesting than Granada; it is not so much Spanish as it is European. The people will tell you that Madrid is quite a different place now to what it was in the time of old Ferdinand VII. You may see on the Prado how the tailor and the milliner are rapidly denationalizing the population. That is to say, they are ceasing to be national, and are becoming cosmopolitan; yet amid all, the Madrilénian is true to Madrid. Differing from all the rest of the world, he thinks that Madrid is the finest capital of Europe, that heaven itself is situated exactly overhead, and that Madrid is, in fact, a part of heaven which has descended upon earth.

Lord Geoffrey was glad to escape into lodgings that were expensive from an hotel that was ruinous. Of all dear places Madrid is the dearest. He took the precaution prescribed in the Handbook of asking for his letters, first, under the name of Geoffrey and then under the name of Plantagenet. His lodgings were, he found, very near the abode which Charles I. occupied in the Calle de las Infantas Plazuela del Rey. 'Through the kindness of the amiable lady of our minister, I obtained an introduction to the diplomatic circles, some members of which I had known on my previous visit to Spain, and I had always a home in the hospitable mansion of my own embassy. It forms no part of my purpose to describe anything that I may have seen under these circumstances.' These are words which I was reading a day or two ago, and my friends will see their force. And, indeed, it is unnecessary to enter upon strictly private ground. Anything of ordinary importance comes under the head of the ordinary society of the place, and

anything of extraordinary importance becomes matter of past or contemporary history. The diplomats complain heavily of Madrid. It is, in fact, a place where there is hardly place for their vocation. For the art of diplomacy is confessedly very much the art of dining. And as Madrid, as a rule, entertains very imperfect conceptions on the subject of dining, it also entertains very imperfect conceptions on the subject of diplomacy. In fact, English diplomacy has not fair play in that atmosphere of deceit and deception. It has been said that it is impossible for an English diplomatist to send out a letter which remains private for more than a quarter of an hour. I think if Sir Henry Bulwer ever follows the example of Guizot, and publishes his ambassadorial experience, we shall find the most disagreeable chapter of modern diplomacy. Amid all diplomatic documents there is scarcely a ruder or more insulting letter on record than that which the Spanish minister addressed to Sir Henry, and which resulted in the temporary cessation of our diplomatic relations.

In Clarendon's letter 'to my children,' prefixed to his 'Contemplations and Reflections on the Psalms,' applying them 'to the troubles of this time,' a letter which, from its autobiographical value, deserves to have been better studied by the critics and historians, he does not give a more flattering description of the fashion and diplomacy of Madrid in his time. 'The scene upon which that employment was to be acted, added very much to the melancholique of the condition I was in; being then an ambassador in a grand court (as that of Spain will always be); in a court where very few men knew or cared what was done three leagues out of the narrow little town wherein they spent and desired to spend the whole term of their lives; and where all, some few excepted, believed that no Protestant could be worse used than they deserved to be; in a court, which at that very time maintained an ambassador with those very regicides against whom all the kings of the earth ought to have denounced

fire, and sword, and extirpation. Every day administered such matter of mortification to me (though towards my own person they were civil enough) that I quickly discerned that what I laboured and longed for could not come to pass by any hand that held a sceptre upon earth.' Even Lord Chancellor Campbell, his biographer, makes the naïve admission; 'with the other writings which amused his exile, I am not sufficiently acquainted to pronounce any opinion upon them.' Some of Clarendon's experiences at Madrid are sufficiently interesting and amusing. For a time the Spanish coast ignored him. When Prince Rupert came upon the coast with a fleet, the Spanish, then expecting their galleons, were very civil. When, however, the English Commonwealth sent a still stronger fleet, the ambassadors 'found themselves less regarded.' When Charles entered Scotland and received a welcome they were once more civil; but when the royalist troops were defeated, the King of Spain civilly requested them to leave Madrid. Clarendon noticed that every ambassador at Madrid, with the exception of the resident from Denmark, was an Italian. The Nuncio was Julio Rospigliosi, who afterwards became Clement IX. He gives a curious account of the 'toros,' or bull-fights; which shows points of difference from the present system. In those days a bull would be admitted invincible by all ordinary means, and recourse was had to English assistance. 'A good bull hath his revenge upon many poor fellows. Sometimes he is so unruly that nobody dares to attack him and then the king calls for the mastiffs, whereof two are let out at a time, and if they cannot master him, but are themselves killed, as frequently they are, the king, then, as a last refuge, calls for the English mastiffs, of which they seldom turn out above one at a time, and he rarely misses taking the bull, and holding by the nose, till the men run in; and after they have hacked him they quickly kill him.' I remember another instance parallel with that which Clarendon recalls,

where diplomatic proceedings at Madrid were exceedingly accelerated by the presence of an English fleet off the Spanish coast. A good account is to be found in one of the volumes of Lord Stanhope's 'Life of Pitt.' The matter ended in that important landmark of international law, the Convention of Nootka Sound.

An English ambassador did a kindly work for Spain which Spain ought to have done for herself. When Mr. Ford was residing at the Alhambra, which he knew so well, and has described so eloquently, Mr. Addington, then our minister at Madrid, was making him a visit. The Spanish officials had had the incredible folly of placing a powder magazine among the priceless remains of the Alhambra, which, as it had no conductor, not even a holy week palm-branch, was liable, during any lightning storm, to vie with Vandals, foreign and domestic. 'The accidental visit of an Englishman may have preserved the remains of what Gaul and chance had spared.' For Mr. Addington, thanks to Mr. Ford, strongly remonstrated with the Spanish government, and caused the removal of the magazine. To the ambassadorial circle, the Spanish are indebted for the grand institution of dinner parties; and in this we may be sure that the English element was largely dominant. In these dinner parties the Spanish *grandees* may be met frequently enough, but it is a common complaint that they hardly reciprocate the hospitality which they receive. Spanish society may be set down as unsociable, perhaps more unsociable to the English than to others. We were their preservers in the Peninsular war, and they naturally hate us for it. The despatches of the Great Duke teem with notices, for the most part unfavourable, of the Spanish character; and although in remote primitive districts they speak with admiration of the great English *cid*, *El gran Lor*, they, in general, steadily strive to depreciate. The lies are incredible which are told of the Spanish estate presented to the Duke, a plain manor house with a domain worth a few thousands a year.

Aranjuez, which I mentioned earlier, is, in one sense, an ambassadorial creation. Most persons have some delicious notions about Aranjuez, 'the melodious noise of birds among the spreading branches, and the pleasing fall of water running violently.' Old Evelyn tells us of the elms of Aranjuez, which were the first in Spain, imported from England by Philip II., and, from their rarity, as much admired by the Spanish as palm-trees would be by us. Unfortunately, Aranjuez is a beautiful garden without a palace, just as at Madrid there is a fine palace but no garden. Foreigners may criticize our Buckingham Palace as severely as we ourselves do at times; but the metropolitan palaces are few indeed which can boast so spacious a garden, a little overwooded, indeed, and rather too much overlooked by Grosvenor Place; but still finely watered and almost as spacious as a park. The ordinary population of Aranjuez, which might be taken at five thousand, when the court was there, would swell to fifteen thousand, and the accommodation would be most wretched. 'Even the deipnosophist diplomats,' writes Mr. Ford, 'lived in troglodyte houses burrowed in the hill sides, after the local rabbit-like style of these wretched localities.' One day the papal nuncio gave a dinner in his subterranean mansion. In the midst of the festivity, a cart made its appearance through the ceiling! Things could not go on in this way much longer. The Italian Grimaldi, minister to Charles III., had been at the Hague, and liked it; and, thanks to him, a sort of Dutch town was planted with avenues in the street.

Here is an invitation to the wife of a member of the *corps diplomatique*. I copy it from an American translation of a German work.

'ERMA SENORA,

'Her Majesty, the Queen our Lady, whom God preserve, has been pleased to appoint the hour of six in the evening of the 28th instant for the Ladies *Besamemos*, which is to be held for the plausible motive (*motivo plausible*) of its being the birth-

day of —, which I communicate to your excellency by royal order, for your information, after making known to your excellency that the attendance is to be in court dress and train.

'God preserve your excellency many years.

'THE VISCOUNTESS OF VALLORIA,
'Widowed Duchess of Gor.

.. 'To the Lady of the Minister of ———
'Palace, April.'

Accordingly, the diplomatic circle, of course in full uniform, muster strongly. There is a considerable sameness, as a rule, in these royal entertainments. The scenery is almost always the same; the same velvets, tapestry, white and gold. But the palace is truly marvellous and gigantic in its dimensions; even the very floorings and gateways abound in the most costly marbles. The walls were once grand indeed, when illuminated by those famous paintings, now in the Musée, which Ferdinand VII., with execrable taste, expelled, in order to gratify his hobby for French paper. In this superb collection no ambassadorial portrait is more interesting than that of the Earl of Bristol, the minister here when Charles I. came on his strange wooing to the infanta. It is by Vandyke, 'elegant and satiney,' as Velasquez is dark and stately.' This present party is given in the Reception or Throne Room, the chief saloon, *de los Embajadores*. Mr. Ford, who before his lamented death was the greatest living authority on Spanish matters, dilates on the satisfaction which this room affords to all lovers of fine furniture, 'decorations most princely, the crystal chandeliers, colossal looking-glasses, cast at San Ildefonso, the marble tables, crimson velvet and gold, &c.' We must not forget the innumerable French clocks. How the death's head intrudes at the feast! This is the very apartment where the dead monarch of Spain is always laid out in state.

Let us say that the young attaché will find much to delight him in the queen and court. Let it be said of the grandes, that if they do not often invite the diplomatic

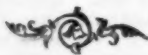
circle to dinners and balls, they often have the upper stories of their palaces crowded with their own dependents and old retainers, whom they bountifully support. A grandee may have an estate of sixty thousand a year, and yet find it exceedingly difficult to lay his hand upon a few thousand pounds. The reason probably is, that he so rarely visits his estate, and, beyond any other person in the world, is the victim of speculation and mismanagement. Wherever the court goes, he follows in its train; he knows nothing of a home recess; banishment from court is banishment from all that makes life desirable. The queen has made the court exceedingly gay. She was only seventeen when she married; she is only twice seventeen now. Born, cradled, nursed, and reared amid revolutions, the perilous paths which she has trod seem only to have lent wildness to her elastic spirits. Although attacks have been made on her palace, and the balls have entered her bed-chamber, no trace of anxiety seems ever to have touched her careless brow. To dance and enjoy, careless of scandal and regardless of business, seems to have been her rule. In her time she has made Madrid the most dancing capital of Europe. Five o'clock in the morning was the usual hour for retiring to rest; and if the court followed the example of the queen, it got up somewhere in the afternoon.

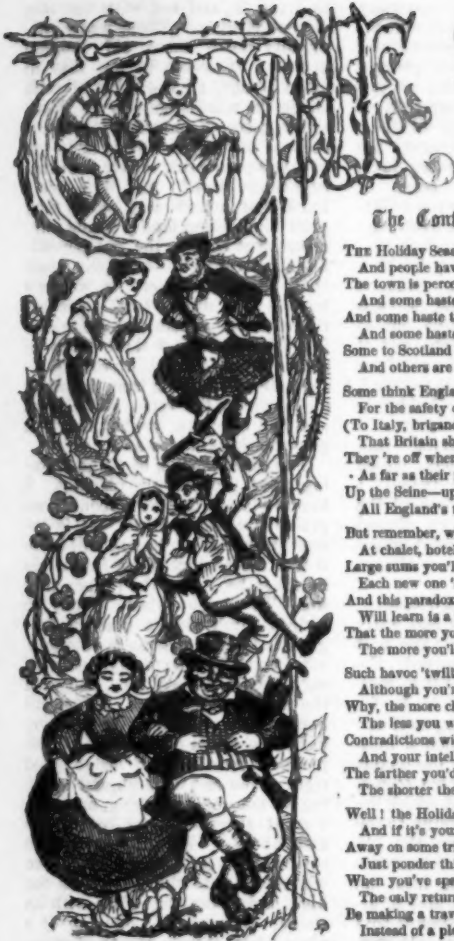
The Spanish marriages—an expression which recalls a sufficiently vivid history to many of us, but which has only an indefinite meaning to the new generation—is perhaps the most remarkable instance in modern history of fashion and diplomacy. I suppose that when the Emperor of the French and the Emperor of Austria met at Villafranca and settled that delicate question about Lombardy—I suppose these illustrious personages were both at the height of fashion and the height of diplomacy. And when the Emperor of Russia came over to this country in 1844, there was a depth of diplomacy amid the blaze of fashion. One of his first

acts was to buy five thousand pounds worth of jewellery in London, to present to the ladies of the English court and the sporting world. A most important element of the fashionable world was propitiated by the magnificent cup to be annually run for at Ascot. But the main object of that visit, as subsequently disclosed by Count Nesselrode, was to prepare us for the dissolution of Turkey, and buy the consent of England by the bribe of Egypt and Cyprus. Various political considerations connected themselves with any proposals of marriage to the young Queen of Spain. We know that these were discussed during the visit of the queen to the Château d'Eu, and during the visit of Louis Philippe to Windsor Castle. And although the diplomatic conferences would be managed by the statesmen of the different governments, we may well believe that in her conversations with her brother of France this interesting subject occupied a prominent position. For the Queen of Spain was in a position which only lately had been that of the beloved Queen of England—a queen regnant, with various competitors for that sovereign's hand. Among these competitors was a kinsman of her husband's, namely, Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg. On the other hand, Louis Philippe had four gallant sons, either of whom might marry the Queen of Spain, or, barring that, the infants, who ere long might be queen regnant. At fourteen, this child queen was sacrificed to the astute diplomacy of France, which, on this occasion, so completely overreached the diplomacy of England. 'This is the first grand thing,' said M. Guizot, 'that we have effected completely single-handed in Europe since 1830.'

Not a word of the moral guilt of the violation of pledges given to our queen. The effect has not been quite so grand as he then expected. The cordial alliance between England and France was then completely dissolved, and the loss of this alliance perhaps contributed towards the fall of Louis Philippe. As for the poor young Queen of Spain, all that married unhappiness ensued which might have been expected from such a beginning. Before a year was over a coldness arose between the king and queen. Her Majesty had a personal favourite, General Serrano—a fact which is matter of history, and was never disguised—a matter which caused no little trouble at least and no little scandal to the ambassadors. At the different embassies there was constant discussion on the subject of a divorce. The government of the country was to the last degree unstable. 'Nothing,' wrote the French minister at Madrid, 'is so easy as for the English embassy to overturn the Moderato ministry. . . . Nothing would be easier than for the French legation to overturn the Progresista ministry, if it chose to set about it.' Under these circumstances it must be a matter of congratulation that things have turned out so much better than could, *a priori*, be expected.

At this point we must take leave, at least for the present, of our subject and of Lord Geoffrey Plantagenet. If he escapes the lethal air of the mountain, and the equally deadly atmosphere of Madrid in his year, a noble career lies before him. I feel pretty certain he will be a Secretary of Legation; I trust he will one day become his Excellency the Ambassador of England.





Holiday Season;

OR,

The Contradictions of Travel.

THE Holiday Season's beginning,
And people have cast off their trammels;
The town is perceptibly thinning,
And some haste to Cairo on camels,
And some haste to Paris by boat,
And some haste to Wales by the railway,
Some to Scotland their leisure devote,
And others are off innisfail-way.

Some think England will suit them the best,
For the safety of purses and persons,
(To Italy, brigands suggest,
That Britain should scarcely trust her sons).—
They're off wheresoe'er they incline,
As far as their money allows, and—
Up the Seine—up Mont Blanc—up the Rhine—
All England's the Up-per Ten Thousand!

But remember, wherever you wander,
At chalet, hotel, inn or gasthaus,
Large sums you'll be called on to squander—
Each new one 's more dear than the last house;
And this paradox you, for your sins,
Will learn is a fact beyond doubt;—
That the more you are found at the Inns,
The more you'll discover you're 'out.'

Such havoc 'twill play with your pelf,
Although you're a clever contriver,
Why, the more change you get for yourself,
The less you will get for a 'saver.'
Contradictions will harass you so,
And your intellect threaten to gravel;—
The farther you'd have your means go,
The shorter the road you must travel.

Well! the Holiday Season's beginning,
And if it's your serious intention
Away on some trip to go spinning,
Just ponder this fact which I mention;—
When you've spent time and comfort and treasure,
The only return that you'll have 'll
Be making a travall of pleasure,
Instead of a pleasure of travel!

NOTES OF FOREIGN FASHIONS.

FOR people who want to find many old English fashions, it seems to have become necessary that they should seek them abroad. We read of old English gardens, and of sunny orchards where gnarled old trees are moss-grown; we see in our old pictures, fragments of ruinous balconies, lovely in their decay amidst their exuberant foliage. The wood fires on the dogs, which give out such scent of warmth when their white smouldering ashes are roused by a fresh log; the alcoves that rooms are full of—for us found only in story-books—and then, again, all the manners that speak of a quiet life, perhaps somewhat of the vegetative, but so charming just to drop into, out of the whirl of town life, and out of our civilization. When people go abroad, it is mostly with some hobby, to which they turn such attention as is not required by sight-seeing—that terrible bane of travellers, which gives them no peace or truce! I suspect, indeed, that I was of the number of those who go abroad rather in search of the land where the hands of the clock are always afternoon.

I did not want to go sight-seeing, but the last six months had fairly tired me with their whirl; and as it was clear, that, in England, the world would not stand still to rest, it was most refreshing to be for awhile in Belgium, feeling as if the life-tide had gone back half a hundred years, wandering in the quaint streets over the moss-grown stones, gazing at the sky, against which the pinnacles cut short, listening to the *carillons* that rung from the old church towers, watching the crowds who poured all morning into the great churches—so great and so divided with their many chapels that even large numbers of people were perfectly lost in their space—noticing the friendliness and equality of the ranks, where the nobleman and the workman, being nobleman and workman, kept quite in their own places, and were accordingly friendly, and where the dear old

houses were wide and broad and roomy, and were built with a view to living in, and not with the sole view to fashion. There was a personality about those old Belgian houses. It seems to me that in made things, all the value of each lies in the mind-stamp on it. Each single piece of creation is perfect because divinely stamped; and even in man's poor work, surely the same rule shows itself! And thus it is I think that houses and rooms that grow moulded to family wants, furniture that betrays the one pervading mind ruling it—even the dress that bears token of its wearer's taste—the dress that somehow shows us her general line of viewing things—each of these seems to me to have a human interest, quite separate and distinct from the walls and ceilings, the satin and chintz, and the sweeping or flapping that pervade these subjects.

The absence, too, of 'high farming,' was provokingly pleasant. I know! Don't tell me about 'two grains of wheat for one.' It is intensely interesting, but we will leave it to Mr. Gladstone, if (as I conclude he must be) he is the proper person. To people whose hobby is hedges, think what a place is Belgium! After the farms in England with fences kept so neatly, and with such square-clipped tops, and with the banks clamped up beyond all hope of a violet, think of the acute delight of seeing a good old-fashioned, plenty-of-room-sort of hedge, good eight or ten feet through, and growing all tall and branching, and then a great space of grass between it and the field. It's all very well to say that that grass might have been wheat, and that the hedge was too high and spoilt the place with its shade. Give me the blessing of a place where there's plenty of room. It made one comfortable—one felt that the world was larger. What a thing room is really—that is the secret, no doubt, of the comfort of roomy halls and of broad, spacious staircases. I don't know why else it is that one knows one had so much

rather live in an old house with plenty of hall and staircase, even with small rooms comparatively, than live in a modern villa with six feet of 'entrance,' and about four of staircase, even although the rooms are 'spacious, with plate-glass windows.' Then, too, I am doubtful about my love for plate-glass. It makes a room not a room. It has to me the look of being too much out of doors.

But talking of windows reminds one of what one has seen out of windows; and one of my Belgian pleasures was the way people used their animals. One day, last autumn, in Brussels our windows on the Place Royale commanded the following scene: a cart is in the Place, drawn by a great big dog, a big boy in attendance; a heavy shower comes on; dog lies down, and looks up inquiringly at boy; boy instantly produces a large umbrella, opens the said umbrella, and holds it over the dog! And now, upon my word, I saw that with my own eyes, and have been in fits of laughter whenever I have thought of it since.

Every one knows Belgium; and I suppose one must not talk of those quaint old towers of Bruges, with its winding streets, that the balls from the guns could not sweep, and of the grand 'lines' of Antwerp, and of the Spanish houses with the ships carved on them, at Ghent—of all these things that bring so forcibly before one the wonderful great blessing our island country has, when she has never known the dread of invaders' footsteps. Nothing ever made me realize a 'battle-field' till I went to Belgium, and well might that general meeting plain be full of such reminders.

But perhaps it is well to turn now to more peaceful and suitable subjects; and, first of all, to give minds a little more matter to work on in the way of contrivances, which really so many people seem to see and yet pass by. And, first of all, I must mention the humblest possible thing, because it struck me in Belgium, and afterwards we must go on to things more of France and of Paris.

I mean the crocks. We go and

buy dear majolica, and beautiful it is. But to any one who happens to go this year through Belgium, Malines and Bruges especially, I say just look at the piles of really beautiful colours, green and blue, brown and red, that old women sell, for a few sous, in half the streets you pass through. The colours are simply beautiful; and though the forms are clumsy, they are not on that account ineffective—ferns and foliage plants, and leaves of large begonias would really look beautiful growing in crocks like these. For halls and passages, and fireplaces in summer, and for the conservatory, such things as these would be charming. It is always nice to collect odds and ends where one goes. It keeps up my theory of identifying one's surroundings with one's life in some way. And abroad there is a way of doing things—a lightness and simplicity which we really want in England, where we are far too much used to follow some beaten track—now shutting out half the light by our heavy curtains and by the wonderful draperies that used to accompany small windows; then getting terrible papers that render our walls a nightmare; then taking to floorcloths and carpets that are awful, throwing ourselves and our furniture into extraordinary relief, somewhat as if we were walking upon the ceiling—simply because the upholsterer will not acknowledge the principle of toning down, from the light above to the darkest part, the ground.

We should gain much freshness, much cleanness, if the polished floors of French houses took more general root in England. The idea of our rough boards is distressing to proper French minds; and I do wonder very much, that the various modes of staining and polishing wood are not more made use of in our smaller villas and cottages, where oak flooring, I suppose, is not to be hoped for; the staircases and passages would thus have a finished look.

Another thing that struck me, was the very simple and light-looking arrangement of blinds and curtains in many rooms in Belgium.

A single fall of muslin, hemmed neatly and edged with lace would fit exactly each of the windows, opening with the window. The light was thus scarcely obscured, the screen was complete, and we were saved all the bother with blinds in opening windows, and the ugliness of a rod and a drawn-in blind cutting the window in two and preventing one's seeing out of it. I saw, too, such nice-looking curtains, merely of thick twilled muslin edged with a little narrow ball-like edging or fringe, and these were so arranged as to cross at the top of each window perhaps three inches or so, giving an air of finish and neatness that no one would have supposed so trifling a thing could give. The chintz, too, abroad is used well, in good houses. We either make loose pinafores for our chairs and sofas, or else we make tight covers that probably look unfinished for want of a completeness and exact adaptation of pattern to the thing that is thus covered.

I think it the greatest blunder when, in chairs that are worked or chintz-covered, one sees the bunches of flowers cut off through the middle. It says at once, this chintz, or this embroidery, was never meant for this chair. Abroad, with their large patterns, they can often manage better to give one pattern to each; and if not, they finish off with a frill of chintz, which gives a smartness and finish, and has a neat look about it which is altogether French. This air of being intended for the thing it is used for, is, I think, what gives the air of peculiar good style to the furniture covered with patterns in which a wreath runs all round; even where some plain stuff of one colour is used, and corded and finished, it has so much more elegance than a gaudy unfinished covering. I never think anything prettier, for the finest drawing-room, than self-coloured silk or satin, made up with well-chosen bands. And in the house, some time ago, of one of our best painters, I remember the furniture was all of self-coloured crimson, relieved by a Turkish pattern of blue, in a band that trimmed each chair or sofa-cushion.

Why do not people bring back again the pretty old work of long ago, when flowers and leaves and birds were cut out of gay chintz, and arranged in artistic groups upon grey or gold-coloured, or pale sea-green linen, being stitched on neatly, each thing for an object.

No work seems to give more room for arrangement and taste than this. It is most inexpensive—and a country drawing-room, or a boudoir thus furnished, would be really in good and unbackneyed style; it would have a use and an object; it would have some stamp of the worker, and would retain its value with the associations that grow about cared-for rooms.

I remember so well, a very unartistic set of curtains done thus, that were a hundred years ago supposed to be in the drawing-room, and that had come in my time to hang in other windows where we used, as children, to marvel at the patience that had done all the patchwork. They were extremely ugly; but nothing in the world could have made them look vulgar. There was finish, and care, and goodness about them, enough to make them respected as long as two threads held together; and the bag, which is now the last relic that I possess of them, is, and will always be, eminently respectable.

Now think, as I say, of this furniture, on pale gold-coloured linen—or on sea-green is better—roses and ferns, and flowers in long wreaths down the windows; slender garlands weaving themselves round each chair and sofa cushion, and, here and there, chair-backs adorned with a well-arranged spray. I suppose very dainty people might even do this on white.

Abroad, these things are more done still, because there is more time. People are not half so busy in French and Belgian towns as we are, who are for ever rushing from place to place. There is a wonderfully charming feeling that one touches on now and then, of living in the times of Adam Bede again.

There is life, decidedly; but it is leisurely life. The shops are provokingly torpid, and strike one as

most heartless, when one wants things not to be had, and expects to hear instant promises of having it down by next train. Still life of this sort is the life in which things get done. I think we are sometimes too busy to be able to set to anything. However, as 'London Society' is said to be met with everywhere, perhaps these small hints of work may penetrate where there is time for them, and where people can feel acute pleasure in the thought of a new occupation; where society is not cut and dried, as ours is quietly becoming.

There really is, in a way, more simplicity about French than English life. People do not, in the former, seem to be half afraid of doing what is convenient, and of wishing to make the best of all things about them. It is simply an acknowledged and legitimate desideratum. I think it is very harmless for people to show what they feel. If they are ashamed of a thing, one fancies that it should be the root, and not the mere branches they stifle.

And then, as every one goes with the intention of pleasing and being pleased, things are apt to go on with very much more *entrain*. Exceptions, no doubt, prove all rules, and there may be exceptions to this; but, as a rule, in France people very much take their own way. Those who like going out, go; and those who wish to stay at home, stay.

There is no law so universal that every one is drawn into it. The infinite variety is one of the charms of French life. The toilettes are made for the wearers. No two persons are quite alike—in consequence, no two toilettes. The sort of parties vary with the houses. There is no sudden outbreak of one sort of amusement, that one sort being worked to death.

Last night I was at a party—one of the most amusing and well got-up that I have seen. There is such a habit abroad of taking things as you find them. I could not help thinking last night what Englishwoman would ever dream of asking even a dozen intimate friends to tea, under the same circumstances

as those under which this charming affair was got up. The rooms were those of a furnished lodging. They were small and exceedingly low; the drawing-room crossed with beams; the furniture downright shabby. The dining-room was upstairs, over the drawing-room, and a small sort of lobby was the only place for the cloaks. And yet, in this house, they receive regularly several times a week; the guests received and the toilettes would grace London or Paris courts; and there is an *entrain*, an absence of formality, a consciousness that the people, and not the rooms make the soirée, which really must be seen to be at all appreciated.

The entertainment last night was in the form of charades. Charades, which played with French wit, were in themselves the most charming and piquant little dramas. There had been no rehearsals, 'people can't make the same hits twice'—rehearsals spoil all the life of things, so some of the actors told me. The first word played last night was *Basse-cour*. For the first of these words a much enduring, but by no means long-suffering leader, was anxiously endeavouring to organize a concert. The basso's self was forthcoming—he had heard the demand for such a thing, and appeared with excellent testimonials; but when his organ was talked of he had to go and fetch it. And the big violoncello emitted astounding growls. The cour was a German princedom. The reigning duke was magnificent. He opened negotiations, and sought the co-operation of France with most happy sense of royalty and equality. The neighbouring power 'offusqueing' him must forthwith be crushed. The general in chief of the armies was called into the council. The uniform was brilliant, and so was the conversation. The courteous French ambassador with the *savoir faire* of great courts had to listen with interest to the report of a standing army,—'cavalry, and infantry, and artillery,' being described as mounting 'in the aggregate' to 'a force of twenty-five men.' The characters here were the grand duke, who

appeared in a red uniform; the duchess who sat by quietly and asked now and then pertinent questions (not to say impertinent ones); the minister of foreign affairs, who prompted his ducal master; the grande maitresse, and the general; and lastly, the poor French ambassador.

Here comes the whole word Basse-cour. Awful gruntings are heard in the distance—surely they grow nearer; it can't be on the stairs. Alas! a pig is in peril, and after sounding snorts—a scuffle—a bolt, and squeals numerous—in enters to the company a very nicely-dressed pig, combed and washed to perfection, and looking quite pinky and white. Piggy in a few moments attains some equanimity, and is, I suspect, more composed than the party who has the charge of him! However, his small eyes peep with wonderment over the scene, and the footlights especially perplex the porkish mind greatly. Poor piggy is held too safely by the orthodox string, and as I always shall protest, the chamberlain and ex-deputy who conducts the pig don't know his business, and so he is awkward, and catches his own leg in poor piggy's string—an insult and a tug which any pig would resent as this piggy does, emphatically. Then there are ducks and fowls too, it becomes a downright farmyard; and that, by the bye, is only saying how well they did Basse-cour.

French balls, too, are very amusing. It is so unlike England. In the part of the country where I was staying circumstances were favourable, and I had such introductions as threw me at once into the real society of a pleasant and bright French circle, where the old noblesse fought rather shy of the Orleanists, and where the present régime seemed tolerated by all parties—as to my mind it well might be. These little French country balls seem to me uncommonly to resemble those of our own real country neighbourhoods; though these, I believe, are getting quite spoiled in the last few years, and were in their last days when I knew them, now ten years ago. The French 'rural neigh-

bourhoods' are much more rural than ours; and if that has disadvantages it has also its compensations. However, a French ball is a very amusing thing to see. From the first moment when some of the stewards rush eagerly to meet and conduct to the ball-room any visitors they wish to honour (said stewards incessantly being called out all the evening to perform this duty; and being heard surreptitiously inquiring who it is, and caught in betraying most evident partiality)—from the moment you are placed safely upon those red-covered sofas—through the amusing advance of all your acquaintance one by one, who marching right up in front of you and bowing profoundly, say with startling gravity, 'Mademoiselle, j'ai l'honneur de vous saluer,' turning round immediately to repeat the same phrase to your neighbour—through the graceful dances where French knowledge of drapery shines, even to the extent of hiding ungraceful movement—through all the horror you cause if you talk and forget yourself, for dancing amongst the unmarried set is meant to be solid dancing, and does not include much conversation; from one end to the other I call *one* French ball great fun.

The scene, too, is so much gayer than our English ball-rooms often are. There never are any black dresses, not only among the dancers, but even among the chaperones. It is not etiquette to go to a ball in black: if you are really in mourning you ought not to go to balls. Then how French women do dress. They are often such ugly women, and yet they look so pretty! You never see them wear a dress which gravitates to dullness—the colours are all so clear—so tending to pure light always. Their greys are silver, not drab. Their blues are clear, not purple. Their pinks are rose-coloured, not brickly. And their hair is arranged so charmingly, with such an absence of uniformity, that horrible night-mare which last year possessed English women with *chignons*! The flowers, too, are so suitable. No heavy wreaths worn to be worn. There is not a French

lady's maid who would not, in a moment, destroy one of the most charming, or most expensive wreaths to pull one flower out of it. Madame looks best with that one flower alone. Is the wreath or Madame the object to be considered? 'Va! Madame est coiffée à merveille!' and I must confess the maid seems to have the best of it. Of course, one sees ugly heads—girls of eighteen plastered and powdered; but it is very rare that after their first season the women are not dressed well. It is the same idea running through everything—

that of suitability. I don't say that there are not a thousand ridiculous things done, as when all Paris shines out at once in gold-coloured hair. But, as a general rule, people build their houses and arrange their furniture chiefly to meet their wants. Their parties are got up in accordance with the spirit and means of the moment, and are meant for amusement rather than dire necessity, and the dress is chosen with some regard to the wearer. And all these several things I wish we might see in England.

FLIRTATION CORNER.

WHERE is Flirtation Corner? that of Tattenham is not unknown to us; with the Corner where the 'settling' takes place, we have a slight acquaintance. Is it Hyde Park Corner? Not exactly; and yet it is. For Flirtation Corner is, in good sooth, your real Hyde Park Corner; not Hyde Park Corner proper: though far be it from us to suggest the contrary of this appended epithet.

Flirtation Corner, which is by this time an established London nook, lies between the Row and the drive, and is occupied entirely by pedestrians. Hither comes light-o'-glove, bright-o'-boot swelldom—its custom always of an afternoon; and hither come the fairies of the elegant bonnet and neat boot.

The recreations of this charming spot are chiefly games, which are played here every afternoon by everybody, with much zest and spirit. 'Fool in the middle' may here be seen in all its glory; and 'puss in the corner' is far from unfashionable. A new amusement, invented by gentlemen who are old enough to know better, is also much patronised in this same corner; it is called 'Chase the Balmoral,' and takes its origin from 'Hunt the slipper' of our childhood. This game generally results in 'Follow my leader,' which, classical authorities inform us, was the 'little

game' indulged in by the King of gods and men, yclept great Jupiter, when he went out swan-hopping in the mythic times of the mighty gods of old.

They are not all idlers who frequent this place; far from it: we can tell you of their manufactures, their bargains, their profits and losses. Of the first of these, the Making of Eyes is an extensive business with most of them. Men and women find employment in this department. It is a pity that the legislature does not interfere to prevent certain people 'past mark of mouth' from working at this trade. It is injurious even to the young: but when old Squaretoes tells them so, will they believe him? I trow not, seeing their creed is that old Squaretoes, when a youth, did the same thing himself. Old hands at a business can work admirably without any interest in their own operations. A competent witness has informed me of printers who will set up the type for a daily paper while fast asleep, roosting as it were on two legs; and I myself have seen a practised professional musician argue an abstruse political question, while playing those exquisite variations entitled the *Skyrocket*. Not otherwise is it with your middle-aged manufacturer of eyes, who will make them mechanically. *Vanitas vanitatum!* all is vanity! The

beginning and end of flirtation, whether in the Corner or out of it, is Self. 'Are we not fascinating creatures?' cry the eye-makers to one another.

Of late, the Corner has extended its borders, and includes equestrians and riders in carriages, who are drawn up just within and just without the enclosure of The Row.

Is this crowd a fortuitous concourse of atoms? No such thing: the nucleus of the gathering consists of those who, with provident care and accurate topographical observation, have fixed upon the time and place for a rendezvous.

At one of the three balls at which Miss Lovell has assisted overnight, she has been asked by young Symper the matter-of-fact question, 'Do you drive in the Park every day?' To which she has returned the seemingly straightforward answer, 'Not every day. We were there this afternoon.' Which elicits the inquiry, 'Will you be there to-morrow?' Miss Lovell thinks it uncertain: but is sure that if mamma *does* go out in the carriage at all in the afternoon, it will be with a view to the Park, where they will take up their station near the entrance of Rotten Row, opposite the clock over the lodge. 'Very useful clock that,' hints Symper, slyly; 'it saves such a deal of anxiety.' Miss Lovell smiles, but says nothing. Symper says that when he patronizes the Park it is about the hour of half-past five. Miss Lovell is of opinion that most people go there about that time; mamma does, for instance. 'Oh! half-past five,' says Symper; and is it wonderful that, precisely at that hour, Miss Lovell, sitting to all appearance listless and unobservant in the maternal carriage, which has drawn up on the exact spot above described, raises her large eyes up to the clock over the lodge, and languidly makes a calculation. If she had taken out her pretty little miniature watch, maternal suspicions might have been aroused. The clock's open face informs her that it is just half-past five; and this piece of intelligence it conveys in unmistakable language to some

hundred others who are noticing the progress of its hands. Divide this hundred into so many pedestrians, so many equestrians, so many riders in carriages, and we have the elements of the crowd to our hand. 'Punch' once showed us a couple of helpless swells, drawn as only poor John Leech could draw them, parting from one another on a fine afternoon in the season. 'Ta-ta, Gus,' says one exquisite to the other. 'I shall go and show myself in the park.' The title of the picture was—'A boon to the public.' These two feeble creatures represent a class, who 'come to see, and that they themselves may be seen,' which is our old familiar friend *venient spectatum* of the Latin Grammar; and in these you have another large item in the component parts of the crowd at and about Flirtation Corner.

Symper, not without misgivings on the score of the cordiality of Mamma Lovell's reception, approaches the carriage. Of course Miss Lovell is surprised; and her mamma actually does not see Mr. Symper—in fact she is looking in the opposite direction—until informed of his presence by her daughter; whereupon she inclines her head, as if she were troubled with incipient lumbago. The carriage cannot advance or 'back,' being in a block; and when they *are* able to make a move, Miss Lovell is severely lectured, and, in consequence, makes up her mind to repeat the performance on the first opportunity; so that despite mamma's precautions, at Lady Mufli's ball, on the very same evening, the name of Symper occurs very frequently on her daughter's card.

Two daughters, uniting their forces, can be exactly one too many for any mother. Ellen fancies that she'd like to sit down on one of those seats, or to walk just ever such a little way. Mamma acquiesces; and when the carriage stops at one of the openings, proposes that Laura the elder, Ellen the younger, and herself, should, all three, join the pedestrians for a few minutes.

Laura prefers remaining seated in the carriage: let Ellen and mamma go together.

Mamma reluctantly assents to this proposition; and, in company with her elder daughter, is soon lost in the mazy crowd. Captain Sparkes happens to be quite close to the carriage when this change is made. What a curious coincidence!—quite a coincidence. Laura informs him that if he'd been a little sooner, he'd have seen mamma and Ellen. Indeed! how unfortunate! The Captain is, of course, disconsolate at the loss he has sustained. He must make up for it at once: and forthwith commences the business of Flirtation Corner.

Look at that brilliant equipage! Silver and blue! a pair of the sweetest, showiest ponies, guided by such snowy reins, and tickled into pace with such an elegant parasol-whip! A defiant beauty sits in the trap—in this man-trap, marvelously well baited. Not many hats are raised in honour of such bright-hued Ephemerids as these.

Alas! they're a long way past Flirtation Corner. Drive on, lonely withered hearts! Flatter yourselves that you are not worse than your neighbours. Captain Sparkes is talking to Miss Laura now, and cuts you.

Scorn for scorn! But he shall pay for it. How? By the loss of your smiles? No; by *gaining them*. Look to yourself, Captain!

The male *habitués* of the Corner are divided into three classes—the Lounger, the Dawdler, and the Dangler; and each of these has his own peculiar physiology.

The Lounger is a professional loungeur. Wherever he may be, he loungeeth. He hath no great amount of conversation, albeit he is an excellent listener. In the Park, he prefereth leaning against, or lolling over the railings, to a seat in the most comfortable chair. Not being a flirt himself, he wondereth much at the activity of men who indulge in this thankless occupation. He hath always loungeed, as a boy, as a youth, as a man. Haply he hath loungeed in long clothes. He can ride; but doeth it not. He can row; but doth not. He hath ability to play at several games; yet doth he not employ it. How he hath become acquainted with any of these accom-

plishments affordeth a puzzle to many. He affecteth small canes with elegant handles, from which, while leaning against the rails, he apparently deriveth sustenance by suction. The canes must be inexhaustible sugar-canes. Silver, gold, or ivory he sucketh, and is therewith content. May-be he hath never forgotten the coral of his infancy. Peradventure, his mind may still be in the coral and bells period? In one respect, let us hope it is so. Nothing in particular distracteth the Lounger's attention from everything generally. Streams of carriages, varied colours, noise and bustle do not bewilder him. He consorteth with others of his own kidney; yet speaketh not to them when at the rails, where each loungeeth side by side his fellow in silent sympathy. He recognizeth some one in a brougham with the feeblest intimation. He troubleth not himself with remembering names, being satisfied that the face he hath saluted is not altogether unknown to him. He changeth the form of his lounging occasionally, leaning on one or other arm alternately; but he hath an ability for loungeing a couple of hours at a time, yet showeth he not any signs of weariness; this, likewise, repeateth he every day during the season, and every season during his life, as long as there existeth a park, a rail, and a fashion of loungeing.

The Dawdler is a man of conversation. He taketh you by the button-hole, and telleth you a good thing. He seldom trieth the rails, but expendeth a goodly store of halfpence on the chair-proprietor. Like noble landed gentry, he hath, for the time being, a fine seat in a splendid park. He starteth for the Park in the afternoon, intending, he saith, to stop there five minutes. He remaineth there two hours. He is always leaving; yet doth he never depart, until the movement becometh general. He never hath any particular engagement or employment, and accepteth every invitation offered him. The Dawdler's day passeth away, and is gone, before he hath made up his mind, definitely, upon any one course of action.

Alas! the Dawdler's life passeth away and is gone for ever, before he hath found a use for his existence. Albeit, the Dawdler is a harmless creature; if to do nothing is harmless. The Dawdler in Flirtation Corner is of use to the young couples, seeing that he inclineth to conversation with the mamma and chaperon. This is the use of the Dawdler in Flirtation Corner.

The Dangler is always young. He is consumed by a secret passion for some fair one in a carriage. His friends speak to her; he boweth and standeth aloof. He walketh with an acquaintance, who talketh to other acquaintances, whom the Dangler knoweth not. He delighteth to appear as one of a little *côterie* gathered around Beauty, or around a celebrity, male or female. He weareth out a many brims in salutations. Being encouraged, he can flirt; but soon subside into his

normal dangle. It contenteth him to walk in the gutter, while his companions occupy the pavement. As a third person singular in Flirtation Corner, where 'two is company,' he hath not his equal. The Dawdler and Lounger may smoke; the Dangler smoketh not.

He is happy in being of service to the fair sex, who somewhat, as is their wont, impose upon his weakness. A lover may trust him. In society he is, in theatrical language, the 'walking gentleman.' On the stage he would be on terms with the hero, as 'Charles, his friend.'

Are there female Loungers, Dawdlers, and Dangers? Undoubtedly. Such being the case, we will saunter down to Hyde Park, make our observations, and reserve for some future time any further remarks upon the doings at Flirtation Corner.

F. C. B.

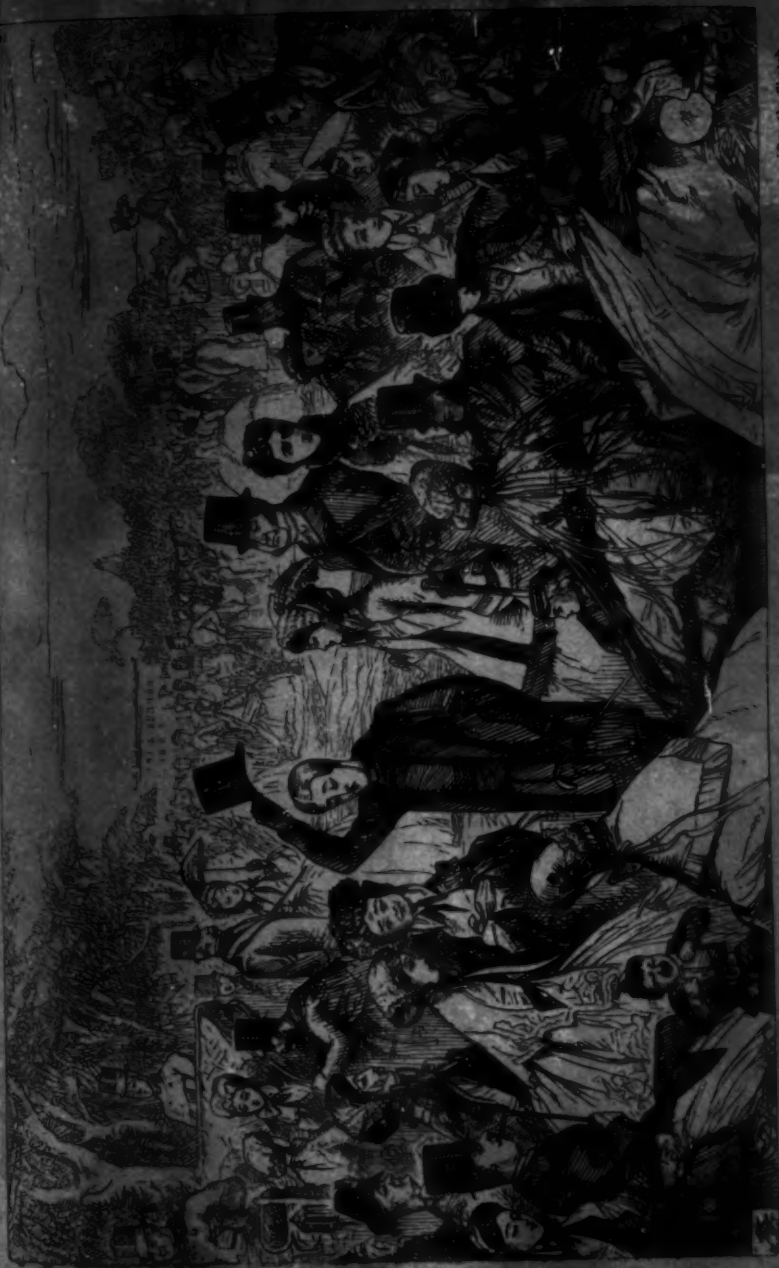


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Drawn by T. S. Sowerby.

FLINTATION CORNER

[See the Sketch.]







Drawn by Kate Edwards.]

FIVE MINUTES LATE!

[See the Poem.]

LONDON SOCIETY.

SEPTEMBER, 1865.

WHERE SHALL WE GO?



CHAPTER I.

INVESTIGATION CONCERNING THE FARMERS' AND LABOURERS' SITUATION, AND THE
MEANS FOR IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF THE EXTREMELY POOR—
THE SITUATION OF THE LABOURING CLASS IN THE COUNTRY—THE SITUATION OF
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THE SITUATION OF THE LABOURING CLASS IN THE COUNTRY—THE SITUATION OF

YOUR Commissioner, deputed by the government of 'London' to examine into, and to report upon the important question—where himself that he has done it in time, rather. The plan that the Commissioner (originally 'we,' and myself, however, 'I') first of all determined upon, was the excellent one of examining witnesses, who, by personal observation and reference to their knowledge

enabled your humble servant to give the public a somewhat well-informed report, as to the situation of the rural population.

The result of this instructive inquiry was in fact almost brought to the generally placed (and of your overworked official, the heart of the truth, but he breathed a sigh. These notes, which are of a somewhat nature, but for them have not the stuffing, thereof.